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MARIAN'S TRUST.

VOL. I.

MARIAN'S TRUST.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"URSULA'S LOVE STORY,"
"BEAUTIFUL EDITH,"

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MARIAN'S TRUST.

CHAPTER I.

A PLEASANT WORLD.

Alas! regardless of their doom,
The little victims play;
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day.

GRAY.

HOW beautiful Rosdew looked at all times and seasons in that far west of England where Winters are mild, and the airs of Summer balmy, it would be hard to tell.

Rosdew was the name of an ancient property where a low, many-gabled granite house looked thoroughly home-like, and

claimed the good Sir Thomas Glaucott as its master, being the ninth of that family who had succeeded, from father to son, to its ownership. The present Sir Thomas had won knighthood as a soldier, and was living there with his second wife, in the enjoyment of nearly all those things which are supposed to secure happiness to life. He had never had children, but, as if to make amends, his first wife had been a widow with a son, and Charley Grandison had come from India with his mother and step-father, and made himself from four years old as much at ease at Rosdew as if he had been one born of the house.

When Charley's mother died, Sir Thomas felt greatly puzzled as to what he should do with this boy. The child was not encumbered with relations; it seemed most easy to do nothing; so he sent him to Mr. Angerstein, a man of great scholarship, who lived near, and took pupils, saying to himself, "I shall get him his commission as

soon as possible, and if, in the meantime, he falls in love with Patty Angerstein, why, I can't help it."

That a young man might fall in love with Miss Angerstein was a perfectly natural suspicion. She was a very loveable girl, and a born artist. This great talent, which had been improved by culture as far as in that remote place was possible, gave her a sort of rank among the neighbours; and she took her honours meekly, making people happy through the exercise of her talents. It was not an uncommon thing for a good mother to bring up her shy boy to Angerstein's, before he went to sea, to be parted for they knew not how long from home and Portspadron, to ask Miss Patty "just to take off his head on a bit of paper," to be a comfort in his absence.

But Sir Thomas was not old; he grew tired of a too easy life, got employed to his satisfaction, and leaving Rosdew to the care of two old servants, and the occasional

supervision of Mr. Angerstein and young Grandison, he went again to India.

Rosdew stood in a sheltered spot, backed by wood and rock, about half-way up a fertile valley, which ran down to the sea from the moor-land, where masses of granite formed striking objects of the most picturesque confusion, as if giants had once been at play there, and left immovable evidence of pitch-and-toss behind them. It stood on a velvet green platform, and was approached by a short avenue of magnificent Spanish chestnut-trees.

When you caught glimpses of Rosdew from a distance, it looked surrounded by wood; but when you stood before the house, the space was great, and the view above the trees which peopled the valley was of the sea in its magnificence, with a fine headland stretching out to the left, and giving a sensation of shelter and boundary which was most agreeable to the beholder.

Below Rosdew, and having a small pier

of recent construction, of which everybody was extremely proud, was Portspadron, a fishing-town, once of some importance in a political point of view, as it sent two members to Parliament, but never any bigger than it is now. Houses were dotted about in and near Portspadron—Dr. Perran's, for instance, and the hotel—for there was such a place, though in its appearance as unlike an inn as can well be imagined; and there was one more "gentleman's seat," as the people still called such residences—the Groves, where the old General lived. He was General Harcourt, a man venerated by all the neighbourhood.

If you stand once more in imagination before Rosdew, and fix your eyes on the great headland to the left, you will see cattle straying on the Ridge, and perhaps some of Mrs. Angerstein's servants at work on this slope, among the enclosures which were more inland. If you were standing with them, and looking towards Portspad-

ron, you would see immediately below you the sloping lawn of the Groves. It stood between the village and Rosdew, on the left hand, as you went down the hill. It had not a large domain, like Sir Thomas's place —it was a small property; and the house had formerly been long used as a farm. You could only see the sea from the upper end windows; but Nature had done more than she often does in so small a place; and the taste of the Harcourts had done the rest.

In a happy, sleepy way, life went on at Portspadron, with all the toil of existence done in a way peculiar to the people of such places—as if it were play. A stranger would suppose that the blue-shirted fishermen were always lounging about, gazing at the great sea, leaning against the stone walls that divided the gardens and fields, only prophesying as to the weather, saying when the wind would change, and beginning divinations into the future by preliminary in-

quiries of "How's the moon?" But it was really a busy fishing port; and not far off the mines occupied all vacant hands, by a fixed number of hours at a time, without any consideration of whether the hours fell to the night or the day.

Yet Portspadron was not that which it had once been. Its palmy days were gone—gone with its members of Parliament. In those days there had been no poor-rate—that is, none which the inhabitants had had to pay; people of great respectability had lived so nearly rent free that the difference had not been worth mentioning. There had been a wonderful schoolmaster, to whom all earthly things could be referred for explanation—venerable in a wig, and wearing boots up to his knees.

By another arrangement, happily carried out, a certain number of youths had had the best of training at Mr. Angerstein's, who was a man really of great learning, without paying anything for it. There had been a poor

school also, and a blanket-charity, an excellent soup-kitchen through the Winter, and a glorious Christmas dinner.

These, and many more things, came from a bountiful hand—Lord Reinecourt's. His son had sat in Parliament for Portspadron, as a matter of course; and anybody else whom he might choose had sat with him. And Lord Reinecourt came to the hotel, and his family, too, sometimes, for the hotel was his property; and the best sheets and table-cloths were marked with the Reinecourt arms, a thing which delighted everybody very much.

But when "times got changed," as the people described the coming in of those measures which deprived them of their members, and relieved Lord Reinecourt of his patronage, then "the Lord," as he was, with no idea of irreverence, always called, sold his property, and Sir Thomas's father bought almost all of it; and the Reinecourt dynasty, its pleasures and powers, became a

tradition. Only there were pleasant evidences of the past here and there, as in an old tea-service of Mrs. Perran's of Derby china, which she always told people the Lord had given to her.

When Sir Thomas returned to India, having placed Charley Grandison with Mr. Angerstein, the boy got on very happily, and learnt exceedingly well, for Mr. Angerstein, though an old man then, was still a persevering and an accomplished scholar. His companions in learning were General Harcourt's only son, Herbert, and a youth called Alfred Bellingsby. Charley had gone into the Army, Herbert to Oxford, and Alfred had taken to the sea. Mr. Angerstein, in his old age, refused all other offers of pupils. When the news came of Sir Thomas Glaucott being once more expected back, Mr. Angerstein had been for some time dead.

While Charley Grandison lived with Mr. Angerstein, he had escaped the only danger

feared by Sir Thomas. He had not fallen in love with Patty. He had spent every leisure moment at the Groves, and all Portspadron felt perfectly certain of his love for Miss Harcourt. He was not a youth, to make any concealment of his deeds or his opinions. He was the youngest of the three, but there was no great difference in their ages, Alfred Bellingsby being two years older than Herbert Harcourt, and Charley only a few months younger. These youths were all known to the good people of Portspadron. If a boy of the village was great at "book-learning," it was said that he took after Mr. Herbert; if a young sailor performed any feat of courage or dexterity, it would be said that "he might have been Mr. Alfred himself;" and if anyone sang, danced, walked, talked, shot with unheard-of precision, gave a knock-down blow with an instinctive promptitude in the cause of justice, or encountered any kind of hazard to protect a child or a woman, he was

immediately compared to young Grandison.

Charley was undoubtedly the superior hero. His character could be easily understood by a people who, knowing the joys of lazy ease, could wake up in a moment to impetuous work. They used to excuse their partiality by saying they had known him from a child, they had seen his mother, they had surrounded her grave, which had been made among them; and, to crown all, was he not as good as a son to Sir Thomas?

So Charley, having finished his studies, passed all examinations, been perpetually welcome at the Groves, and fallen in love with Marian, arrived there one night in regimentals—put on to surprise them—and told Marian to fasten his sword-knot, and wish him joy.

General Harcourt was in his glory, and he told Charley he wished he was his son.

"All in good time, thank you, sir," said Charley. A speech which the General never troubled himself to understand, but which

made Herbert look at him gravely, and sent Marian out of the room to hide her tears. She was only fifteen. It made her laugh as well as cry. Charley was so silly, and she was too big to be joked about, as if she were a child. She was, in truth, so young that, when Charley had to say good-bye, he kissed her just as he kissed little Lizzie, who was ten years old.

The village was dreadfully dull because their hero was gone. But Charley had made up his mind.

"Old friend," he said to Herbert, when he came, some time afterwards, on a short leave of absence, "there is some talk of our regiment being sent abroad. But, if I live, I shall come back and marry Marian. Don't let her marry anyone else. I know I am poor, and a dreadfully bad match for any of you prosperous Harcourts, but I'll change all that. You will always write to me, won't you?"

"You are the greatest friend I have in

the world. Do you think I could do without writing to you?"

Herbert spoke gravely and sincerely, from the very depths of his heart. Charley felt the earnestness of his manner so much that he was obliged to make merry, lest the emotion it raised should master him.

"Now bless your handsome face, I'll make free to believe your honour."

"Have you ever said anything?" asked Herbert.

"No. A man can't talk to a child! How could I? But bear it in mind, Herbert, and give me good advice, if I ever ask it of you. You are rich, and I am poor. Sir Thomas ordered Mr. Angerstein to tell me, when the right time came,—and it came last night,—that he had settled on my mother a sum of money which made up her own modest fortune to five thousand pounds; that he has invested it for me in some safe way which produces two hundred a year; that half of that is re-invested every year, and

will be till I am of age; and that the remaining part will be paid to me quarterly. He left me a letter saying that he had arranged this as my guardian, having, under my mother's will, unlimited powers."

"He has used his powers very well," said Herbert.

"Of course. He is Sir Thomas. I would try to be like him, if I had not been born so immeasurably different. It is a comfort to know that there are many kinds of perfection, and that my way may lead to one of them. Then for Marian! Not that I intend to attain my earthly end before I ask for her; women were intended to help us. I shall come back and pick her up when I am about half-way."

Herbert laughed; he had a sensation that Charley treated everything in a merry, boyish way, and that he himself was a good deal more of a man, though he should never wear a sword; so he said good-bye to the young soldier, and looked critically at Marian

in the evening, when she was playing chess with her father, and wondered what sort of a woman she would make.

Two years after, one evening, in a November which was a good deal more like May, Dr. Perran—during his father's life he had been called the young doctor, but he had lately lost his juvenile distinction, and attained his fortieth year—walked into his house, and into the honeysuckle parlour —so called from a carved wreath of that flower which framed a long looking-glass on the wall—and said,

"Well, mother, pretty well to-night?"

"Yes, Geoffrey," said that lady from her seat in the corner, taking off her spectacles, and putting them as a mark into her book.

"Now you will lose them, you know," remonstrated her son. "Here's a letter, which will do as well, and you can read every word of it whenever you like, and burn it afterwards."

Mrs. Perran smiled a most loving, admir-

ing smile, and said, "Sit down; you look full of news. You have much too tell-tale a face for a doctor."

"Oh! never mind. I've nothing to do, that's a comfort. But I really have news."

"Tell it, then."

"Three enormous pieces of news."

"Tell *them*, then."

"Firstly, Sir Thomas is coming here immediately, and his bride. They visit her property in the north of England first of all, which is quite right, as she is an heiress. He married Mary Bardolph—here it is in the newspaper—the day before yesterday, in London, and Charley Grandison was at the wedding. Mr. Herbert Harcourt, the only son of General Harcourt, would have been there——"

"Is that in the newspaper?"

"Yes, I am saying it off by rote. I committed it to memory immediately."

"Oh! go on," she said, laughing.

"—would have been there, had he not

been detained in Oxford, where his presence was required in the schools. We undersand that Mr. Herbert Harcourt has taken a first-class. And here is five pounds from the General for you to spend on the sick and aged, and the poor, beginning with those whose names are on the dispensary books, if you please."

"A first-class!" said Mrs. Perran, holding out her white fingers, and securing the five pounds, her pretty face quite pink with the pleasurable excitement. "It is very much to our credit, and almost makes one wish that Mr. Angerstein were now alive. He always expected good things from Herbert."

Mrs. Perran rose from her chair, and opened the door of an ebony cabinet. She deposited the General's money in an envelope, and wrote on it, "For the poor;" then, having shut the cabinet carefully, she came back to the table, and to her side of the fire, saying over again, "A first-class!—yes, indeed, a first-class!"

"Now may I have some tea?" asked Dr. Perran.

"If you have had any dinner."

"I dined in the town; we had a dinner on the strength of the news."

"But you said you had three pieces of news—what is the third?—and there's the door-bell!"

"It's the wedding-cake. It came to Trevarna"—that was a town about five miles off—"while I was there, directed to Mr. Nicholson, the steward."

At this moment the most enviable of middle-aged servants, who might have been Mrs. Perran's younger sister, and the Doctor's aunt, walked in with a parcel.

"It smells like itself. You might know it a mile off. I'm sure I wish them joy. Did you ever see her, Doctor?"

"Not I, Caryll. But I have dined with Mr. Nicholson, and Mr. Garnet Naylor."

"Ah! Garnet Naylor would be sure to know," said Mrs. Caryll. "And he says she

is as beautiful as anybody can be at forty-five."

"And rich? Is that true?"

"Yes, rich; with a great place in the cold North. I would not leave our place here for all their coal-mines."

"She'll enjoy herself all the more," said Caryll, in a comforting way. "It's sunny and sweet at Rosdew all the year round; and Sir Thomas will never grow old. He has that in him that keeps people smart—not a driver nor a striver," says Caryll; "and it will do my eyes good to see them."

"In the meantime, take out the cake, and put it on the best old red and green china cake-dish. And let us look at it when done," said Mrs. Perran.

Upon which Caryll disappeared, and Mrs. Perran returned to her questions.

"You said there was a third piece of news, my son."

"I forgot it. This is it. The best of all. Alfred Bellinsgby is declared rightful

heir to the Northumberland property—he comes into about three thousand a year."

"And that *is* good. It must all be Mr. Angerstein's doings. He never ceased putting it all together, I know. Indeed I am glad. And where is Alfred?"

"In Lisbon, I heard. But he will be back at the regular time. The *Martha* is expected next week."

The tea went on briskly. Dr. Perran did imprudent things, as doctors do, and had brandy-cherries after his tea, with other improprieties, such as clotted cream and bride-cake.

"You can cure yourself, that's one comfort," whispered the pretty old lady, who had been daintily presiding at the table, and giving him all that he required.

"Oh! you don't know. There's science in all this. I shall prescribe it to my next patient suffering from the same complaint."

"And what is the matter with you?"

"I wonder whether Charley Grandison

will come down with the bride and Sir Thomas. We have none of us seen him for two years."

CHAPTER II.

RESPECTABLE PEOPLE.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee.

BYRON.

THE two years that had passed since Charley Grandison had last stood inside General Harcourt's hospitable walls, had made no change in the General, nor in Mrs. Harcourt, but Marian had become almost a woman; and, standing there in the midst of a greater appearance of luxury than is commonly found, she looked like a beautiful creature, specially created for the place and the occasion.

General Harcourt had inherited all manner of beautiful things; and he had not missed those opportunities which had enabled him to add to his inherited store. The house was a charming irregular building, with unexpected recesses, making quiet corners in well-appointed rooms, where things, rich and rare, were at once exhibited and stored away.

Marian had been made by her father the guardian of all his treasures. He had stored her mind with the learning, and her memory with the gossip, connected with them; and she alone was allowed to touch them. He was dependent on this girl to an unusual degree, having lost one arm in action; and his pet name of *my right hand*, which he always gave to his daughter, pretty well explained the business of Marian's life.

General Harcourt was a most polished gentleman, full of knowledge and of courtly manners. He was very thankful for so distinguished a son, and he admired his

daughter with a most reasonable admiration; for, besides her perfection as a dutiful child, she promised to become a very beautiful woman. General Harcourt knew and saw all this, and he treated Marian, accordingly, with a respect that was like perpetual praise, and with a smiling contemplation which was to her like a promise of all future good

Marian was a brunette, with soft, dark eyes and rich brown hair; a tall, graceful girl, with easy manners, and just that touch of quietness which sometimes distinguishes those who have been blessed with greater powers of endurance than often belong to women. Yet, with it all, she was a happy-hearted girl, who could laugh with those who were mirthful, in as gay and innocent a way as anyone in all the world. Both father and mother looked on her as the light of their house.

Little Lizzie at this time was at school at Amiens. She was a pretty, sprightly child,

on whom Marian lavished such love and attention as—so Mrs. Harcourt observed very mildly—made her father jealous. The life and perpetual motion of this small human butterfly was, perhaps, a little more than General Harcourt enjoyed, in an old age which was made very dependent by the fact that he was a one-armed man. Besides, Lizzie had to be taught. He could not spare Marian, and he would not have a governess. So the school at Amiens was agreed upon, and Mrs. Harcourt gave as much consent as was conveyed in the observation that Marian had heen there, and it had done her no harm.

When Herbert had been free, after Midsummer, he and his mother had taken the child to school, and left her there. Then they had wandered about for three weeks, and paid the child a visit on their return. It was not till after they were gone that General Harcourt woke up to the possible cruelty of what had been done.

"How old were you, Marian, when you went?" he asked, in a trembling voice, as he sat under a cedar which spread its branches into a pleasant shade on the wide terrace before the house.

"I was exactly Lizzie's age. It did me a great deal of good. It is an excellent school. We are very sorry to lose Lizzie, but it is quite right for her."

"You think so?"

"Yes, I *think* so. I don't *feel* so. I feel that she is crying herself sick. But I know that she is in the right place, nevertheless."

"Did you cry?" he asked, with a smile, looking down on her beautiful head as she stooped over her work. The sun, which came through the feathery boughs, made an interlacing pattern on her hair.

"Yes; when none saw me," she said. "But what I learnt there repaid me for all my grief."

"Lizzie will feel the same."

"Not quite. She is of another nature,

and perpetual comfort is what will suit her."

"And you?"

"I do not care for little consolations, as it is her nature to do."

"All the better," said her father. "I am rather anxious for the post."

When the post came it brought a letter from Herbert. It was a good, sensible letter. They had taken their second leave of the child, who felt more reconciled, and was already being made a pet of in the school. He and his mother would be at home in a few days. So General Harcourt was greatly relieved at first, and before night quite satisfied. They had done the sensible thing, he said. And he had got Marian all to himself.

Sending little Lizzie to school had undoubtedly been a wise measure, even if, in some degree, it had been a selfish one. She was a child of great talent, and her talent for drawing almost equalled that of Patty Angerstein. It had been the sight of Patty's

success that had excited Lizzie's powers. Patty used to teach her, and many an hour she had sat with the child, showing her how to use pencil and painting-brush, sitting in sheltered corners of the cliff, and sketching sea and land, and all that might be upon them. So, on further consideration of the whole question, assisted by Marian, the General grew not only to approve of what had been done, but to praise themselves for doing it.

Mrs. Harcourt had had a long season of great weakness after the birth of her two elder children, and her husband had been very anxious about her. When, after several years, the youngest child was born, it had appeared to both of them to be an uncalled-for blessing. However, the child grew, and the mother became strong, and Lizzie was the loveliest child that ever was seen. People used to say so, and it always gratified Mrs. Harcourt to hear it.

"They are all very handsome," she would

say within herself; and having settled that, without a doubt, she was the mother of the most lovely and beautiful children in the world, and, of course, of the handsomest family Portspadron had ever seen, she would feel consoled and satisfied, and remain in an unexpressed state of bliss and thanksgiving, contemplating life in the peace of a great contentment. There were people in the world who supplemented their praises of the grand old General by saying he had a very stupid wife, and they wondered over it. But a wife who had given him so perfect a child as Marian, and so sprightly a fairy as the banished Lizzie, and who had now seen her eldest son come out a first-class man, was not a stupid wife to General Harcourt.

She was a tall, thin, stiff, pretty-faced, silent woman, who never offered an opinion contrary to her husband's, except on a subject within her peculiar jurisdiction, and when she was determined to have her own

way. To this General Harcourt had learned to consent, and he spoke the exact truth when he used to say to Marian, "My love, your mother is always right." She was a woman who governed, so far as she chose to govern, by practising silence and nourishing indifference. She had very few opinions, and so it happened that, when she proclaimed any, she was listened to.

"I want to go to Mrs. Angerstein's, and congratulate her—I want to hear about Mr. Bellingsby," said Marian. She was standing with her mother under the shelter of their parasols just outside the stone porch, and looking at the steep turf side of the great headland which rose in front of their house, leaving a narrow valley between itself and the Groves. "How pretty those sheep look as they move about, everyone with a dark shadow by its side!"

"I wish the Ridge hill were a little further off," said Mrs. Harcourt, "or that it was our own."

"The belt of evergreens at the foot makes a good boundary for us, and the brawling stream, and the scattered masses of granite below, are so perfect! As I stand on this terrace, and see how the shrubs grow up the slope, till their highest blossoms touch our feet, I feel so fond of the place that I can't find any room in my heart for an ambition of any sort. I think the Groves a faultless place."

"Yes," said Mrs. Harcourt, with a satisfied calm.

"And look up there to the left—Mrs. Angerstein's dairy-woman has lighted a wood fire to scald the cream. The smoke goes straight up among the elm-trees."

"It is too far for you to go alone—you said you wished to see her, didn't you? Your father is sure to go—he never omits a civility," says Mrs. Harcourt slowly.

"But he is going to Pontray this afternoon; he wants me to go with him."

"You could go with Mrs. Perran, perhaps."

"Yes, of course—I will see about that directly," says Marian, and she leaves her mother watching the sheep and their shadows, in turn with Mrs. Angerstein's smoke.

Not long after, Mrs. Perran, dusting her geraniums, sedums, and balm of Gilead in the window of the honeysuckle parlour, sees Marian walking up the garden, and also sees her son go to meet her.

"We can all go," says Dr. Perran. "Come, mother, a walk to Angersteins,"—Angersteins had grown to be the common name for the place to which Mr. Angerstein had come so many years before, and where his widow and Patty still lived. "It is a brilliant day—let us go at once."

So Mrs. Perran, whose powers had but little decreased with her growing years, came to them ready for the walk, and they went up the village together.

"Dr. Perran, I am going to ask you a question," said Marian. She often asked questions of Dr. Perran, to whose house

she was always allowed to go, and where she was always taken care of. "Was Mrs. Angerstein always a lady?"

"Yes, and no," answered the Doctor, briskly. "More no than yes, if you consult Burke's Landed Gentry. She comes from a different part of the county. She had a good name—was, as a girl, servant in Northumberland—got into a mess——"

"Oh!" gasped Marian.

"Well, found herself in the middle of a story; and as good a girl, mind, as ever lived," says the Doctor, energetically.

"I delight in a story," said Marian; "do go on."

"Then she came here, and was a sort of a servant; also a friend, nurse, and housekeeper to the Angersteins. I used to attend Mrs. Angerstein for my father, and I got to be fond of all of them. They were very remarkable people. He first came here unmarried, and bought this place, and had two German boys with him as pupils—they

were Germans themselves, you know. She was very pretty, and had a dreary illness. She died, leaving Patty. Then old Angerstein married Margaret Bellingsby. He left her all he had for her life, which she well deserved, so there she is, with Patty, who is the owner of the land, and whom she has reared with a mother's care."

"And what was her story before she came here?" asked Marian.

"Ah! if you are to hear that, she must tell it herself," said the Doctor. "It has ended in making a rich man of her son."

"How mysterious! What odd things happen to us. We, too, might be in the middle of a story if we did not take care."

The Doctor laughed.

"We are all heroes and heroines, only we do not know it," he answered.

"I have always liked Mrs. Angerstein," said his mother; "and there are a host of little contradictions about her, which are, to me, quite captivating. I once spent a few

days with her, because my son said I required change of air. I had bread and honey for breakfast, and such cream as we had at tea I never can forget. She has such pleasant manners; and though she uses the phrases of the place and the people, she speaks in an educated way."

"Yes, I have often remarked that," said Marian. "But even as a child I was in love with Mrs. Angerstein. Before he died, and when Herbert and Charley Grandison were there, I have seen her working in her dairy, and doing other household things requiring brown Holland aprons, and a thick covering on her hair. How beautiful her hair is! And Herbert always said she was such a lady in the evenings, when he went there to visit Charley and Alfred Bellingsby. We used to go also sometimes; and I learned to admire her and everything about her—her black morning gown, her white apron, her neat hands, and her two wedding-rings."

"Yes, the two wedding-rings! Shall we make her tell us the story?"

And so, talking, these three persons passed over the bridge which crossed the brook dividing the Rosdew property from the Angersteins' side of the Ridge. The bridge looked much bigger than the brook needed. But before the coming Winter should be gone, this brook would probably become a torrent, rushing down from the moorland with an overpowering strength, and filling up the little narrow valley in front of the Groves, till it became a wide lake, emptying its waters lower down over the dark rocks into the sea. They stopped on the bridge, and gazed at the pretty rippling stream, where some village children were trying their skill at getting minnows out of the small eddying pools in the sandy bank.

The Doctor told how he remembered that bridge built when he was a child, the river having risen so as to tear an older bridge

in pieces, and carry it to sea on its foaming course. They spoke of how the Angersteins had then been separated from the civilization of Portspadron, and how, though within sight of signalizing friends, they had had to send to Trevarna for the things they could not produce on the place.

"That was many years ago," said Mrs. Perran, "just after Mr. Angerstein came, and before he went to his own country, as people said, to fetch home his little wife. Whether he fetched her from so far, or not, I can't however say. This I know, for she told me, she had been governess at Lord Reinecourt's. And he might have seen her far back, before the times were changed."

By this time they had crossed the bridge, and were walking up a steep ascent, which, through an apple-orchard, led them straight to Angersteins. They were pleasantly met by the mistress of the place, who thanked them cordially for their call.

"We were so glad," said Marian, "to hear of Alfred's good fortune."

"Yes; he has come to his rights. No, Dr. Perran, he is not in Lisbon. He has been there, but he is on the sea somewhere. The winds and the waves be kind to my boy!"

She raised her fair face, which had not a wrinkle upon it, towards the blue sky, and the light poured down upon her, and met the steadfast look in her large, soft, violet eyes; but there were still those marks of chastening on her face which, through some deep, lasting, and early-known pain, had grown into her countenance. But the smiles round her mouth were perfect in their good-humour and gaiety, and told plainly of a heart that could never make others suffer, whatever it might once have suffered itself.

"We are very busy to-day," she said. "I am preparing for my son's arrival, and Patty would have a fire lighted in the room I still call 'the study.' You have not

seen it for a long time, Miss Harcourt."

"I *never* saw it," said Marian. "They—the boys—my brother, I mean, and Charley Grandison, used to speak of it, and I was often promised—but——"

"Ah! yes, I know. He always wanted to show you the place himself—and he was long ill, poor dear!"

"But you owe a good deal to Mr. Angerstein for having so carefully collected every circumstance of your story, and for having so often written and spoken of it," said Dr. Perran.

"Indeed we do," she answered. "Mr. Angerstein hated mystery, and I never loved it. While he was a bed-rider,"—using the expression common to the people, but which sounded strangely uttered in her gentle voice,—"while he was a bed-rider he often spoke of the circumstances of my early life, and oftener still he spoke to the good doctor, your venerable father, sir. He used to say that events might so arrange themselves

as to make it wise not to have my story forgotten."

"Here is one who would like to hear it," said Dr. Perran, pointing to Marian, whose face flushed as she, half afraid of her own words, said she should be glad to hear anything Mrs. Angerstein would tell.

"All about Mr. Bellingsby," she said, with an unusual brilliancy lighting up her soft dark eyes, and her face full of pleading, as she spoke.

Mrs. Angerstein looked at her and smiled.

"Patty is not at home this morning," she said. "I feel idle when she is not here. Let us go to the study, if you would like to see it."

The room was a gem of its kind, and of a sort never to be reproduced. There was a casement window, with diamond-paned glass, open, and letting in the perfume of the last lingering flowers of the clematis, which made a bower just outside. There was an oak book-case filled with books, and

the top was full of old delf, reaching to the cornice—bottles, biberons, great cups and flagons, huge dishes and bowls. There were old easy-chairs, not nearly as easy as the chairs of the present day; a glorious sofa, surpassing all modern inventions in comfort; a grate surrounded with bright tiles, in which a wood fire was blazing, every tile being a picture of life and manners, showing distinctly in the firelight. On the walls of the room were fine prints in the black and gold frames of a hundred years ago. There was on one side a long narrow mirror, and opposite to it, and reflected in it, hung a picture very finely painted, containing the full-length portraits of a lady and gentleman, one of whom held a boy, and the other a little girl, by the hand, all being dressed in the stiffest arrangements of toilette —ruffs, black velvet, the lady's brocade looking as if stretched on solid wood. It was a grand, imposing picture, and you felt in good company as you looked at it.

"It belongs to Patty," said Mrs. Angerstein, "and the very rings, and necklaces, and shoe-buckles that they all have on. They are Angersteins of a day long past. It was all rolled up in a loft, but I saved the butter-money till I could pay for its being cleaned and framed; and it pleased him highly, poor darling, to find that it was done. He had known trouble, and inherited trouble, and the happiest days of his life were those which he spent with me. Ladies," said Mrs. Angerstein, so earnestly that Marian turned her sweet young face towards her with a quick readiness to hear and believe most clearly pictured on it— "ladies, come good, come bad, the remembrance that we have given others joy *is* a joy, and it never flies from our minds. It belongs to us; it becomes a part of ourselves; none can themselves be wholly sad who have had a strong heart to make others happy."

"Yes," said Marian. Mrs. Perran and the

Doctor looked at her, but she was not looking at them. Perhaps she did not know that she had spoken; perhaps the word she had uttered was only the echo from her own heart of the truth that had come from Mrs. Angerstein. Anyhow, no one felt more certainly how perfect a truth had then and there been uttered than Marian.

"I had the chance, and I had the power," Mrs. Angerstein went on, "and now I have the memory and the reward."

After saying this, there was a moment's pause; and then Marian, looking like one eager to hear and docile to learn, yet with something in her face that made Mrs. Angerstein smile, said,

"Now tell your story."

CHAPTER III.

A WOMAN'S STORY.

Still on thy solemn steps attend,
Warm Charity, the gen'ral friend,
With Justice to herself severe,
And Pity dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.
GRAY.

"I WILL begin it now, if you please," said Mrs. Angerstein. She walked to a massive-looking desk, and took out a roll of paper from an inner drawer, which she unlocked. "I only take this to remind me how it is best told. This is an account written by Mr. Angerstein from my solemn word, and written for Alfred's sake. Mr. Angerstein had some legal reasons for hav-

ing it all put down—some possibility occurring to him of some male heir being one day wanted. Alfred used to laugh at it all. He was never a man to live on idle hopes; he was naturally one made to take care of himself. He used to say that he had got his education and his profession, and he knew that a little money would be his, though this property will be Patty's when I am gone. We were never seekers into the future; we never wanted any more from it than we could gain for ourselves with honest hands and thoughtful heads. But I must not keep you here to attend to my moralizing, though I see that Miss Harcourt is an excellent listener; so here is my story.

"I was taken, when fifteen, up into the far North, by a family who came into this country and took a fancy to some of our ways—among others, butter-making," said Mrs. Angerstein, simply. "I had seen the family on visits to our little farm—a smaller,

poorer place than this. I liked them, I consented to go with them, and I was spared. Then death came to my father, I had long lost my mother, and I was glad to keep my home among my new friends, so I stayed where I was.

"The family, who were called Bellingsby, and whose youngest son—there were three —I married, were not perhaps what *you*," looking at Marian, "would call gentlefolks. Still, they lived on their own land, and were an old, and not a needy family, though they all worked one way or another. It was the failing health of one of the girls that had brought them first down into these parts. I was very fond of Agnes Bellingsby. I think that I took something like her place in the house when she died. You must understand that, up in that cold-featured country, among vast tracts of rocky moorland, where the inhabitants are few, and the poor speak a sort of English which I found it very hard to learn, there is, even

among 'decent people,' as we say down here, a roughness quite unknown to the dwellers of the south. So it was up there. And so were they rough, and yet I learned to love them, and would never have left them after my father died, if I could have helped it.

"Indeed," she went on, "they were very kind to me, and I wanted kindness, for my father had lost money in a mining speculation, and his property had to be parted with, and I was left to my own labours for my bread.

"Alfred loved me, and his mother wished for our marriage; but Mr. Bellingsby was always against it, contrary to his wishes, too, it seemed to us; but he always opposed the match. Then Alfred went off to a sheep-farm sixteen miles away, and there was some talk of his taking a place as clerk to a coal company. But this, too, angered his father, who would have had him stick to the land. The eldest son was

a soldier—an officer in the East Indies. I never saw him. The second was a surgeon in Edinburgh—I have seen him many times.

"It was troublesome to have Alfred away, so, with Mrs. Bellingsby's leave, I met him, and married him in the far-off little lonely church belonging to the place where he worked, and where our banns had been called. Then I came back to the farm, and Alfred came with me. His father took little notice; his mother was very glad. Under their roof I lived six months with my husband. Then trouble came. We were threatened with a visit from a rich old powerful man, the head of the family, of whom I heard a great deal after I was married. It had been through fear of him that Alfred had never had his father's consent. You must remember that we were young. Seventeen is seldom over-wise; and Alfred was only just twenty-one.

"It had come to the rich man's know-

ledge that we were married, and he wrote to say that he should visit us at the farm. In this angry letter he declared that Alfred should suffer for having married me; so Mrs. Bellingsby sent us off to the place where he had been before. She told me that she was afraid of Alfred becoming angry under provocation, and injuring himself with the old man; and that her three boys were old Squire Bellingsby's only heirs. She told me that he had purchased the eldest son's commission, and allowed him a yearly income; that Dick's allowance in Edinburgh of a hundred a year was this old man's gift, and that they could not afford to make him angry; so on a cold snowy Winter's day we took ourselves out of his sight. He followed us, however, after a terrible scene at the old home; and he came after us to Cragsleymore, and he would go into the church and see the register.

"The clergyman was a man not as educated as we were. He farmed his little

glebe; his two daughters were in service, and his son at the plough; a decent, well-behaved youth, however. The clergyman was in a terrible fright. The old Squire stood in the vestry, booted and spurred, with a heavy-handled riding-whip, made like a hammer, in his hand; and he was like one who would storm the place down. The book lay open. The register was there. Also in the place was a labourer, with a hod of mortar, who was making some repairs in a wall.

"As the Squire stormed, and struck about with his riding-whip, which he held by the end, where the lash was twisted back under his hand, he dropped the hammer-shaped handle on the mortar, and then dashed it angrily on our written marriage lines. He drew back the whip violently, and tore the written page, and the paper stuck to the mortar. 'There!' he cried, and tore it off into bits in a moment, and went away like one in a triumph. And I

give you my word we were so scared we could neither stir nor speak. So he jumped on his horse, which stood waiting, and rode off with a laugh, which echoed in my ears terribly for months afterwards, whenever I thought of it.

"Well, my friends," continued Mrs. Angerstein, "we were married, and my husband's relations all knew it, but he was in a tempest of rage. The snow lay on the ground, the evening was closing in, but he would not be stayed. He got on one of the horses that were worked on the glebe, and he started for his home. 'I will see my father,' was his cry; 'I will bring all this interference to an end.' I could not keep him by me. He said it was right to go. He took me in his arms—for the last time—and went. His dear body was dug out of the snow the next day. The horse had come back in the night, without a rider—and I was left a widow, with my babe unborn."

There was a touching simplicity in Mrs. Angerstein's manner when she was telling this story. Her hearers felt it so much that they could scarcely speak to ask her to go on. But she had not much more to say.

"I left them. My mother-in-law brought me to London, and she stayed there till my boy was born. They gave me a thousand pounds. I had no claim on them, so I took what they offered, and did as they desired. I left London. I worked for several years in an outfitting warehouse. And I came here as nurse and housekeeper, without wages—that is, my wages were to be represented by the board and education of my son. You know the rest," she said.

"But what became of the Bellingsbys?"

"They are all gone, and the old tempestuous man survived them all. He too is dead now, and he left his property to the daughter of his niece, as I have heard. I believe that he had a right to do as he pleased with his own."

"And by what means has Alfred now obtained a share in his property?"

But before this question could be answered the door opened, and a man whom they all knew put his head in, and then unceremoniously introduced the rest of his body. With a smile, and "Your sarvant, ladies!" he began to speak to his mistress; for he was Jerry, a man destined for ever to be a boy,—being, in some way which even puzzled the doctor, very different from the rest of the world, and incapable of improvement. He was as quick and noiseless as a well-regulated machine, and when questioned about anything on which he had made up his mind that it was right to speak, he always faced round, put his hands behind his back, and gave exhaustive answers, plain-spoken and concise, as if they were parts of the catechism. He carried on Mrs. Angerstein's ready-money butter trade, and conducted the sales by barter at the Groves' shop. He had a head full of calculation,

and a tongue glib at arithmetic, and it was a law of that land that, when Jerry spoke, he *must* be listened to.

It was now a treat to Marian to hear him, as Mrs. Angerstein entered in a thin book the commercial facts and figures of the day. She made no apology. Everybody knew that Jerry spoke when he *could* speak; and that in an hour's time, if the hearing were postponed, he might have memory neither for facts nor figures.

"And I saw two dashers at the door of the hotel, and made my 'beisance, and gied 'em the hour of the day; and they said that they who was expected had arrived; and then the young ones gived me a look, and I never saw such a likeness between a man and a woman in all my life—no, never since I was born into this 'mazing world, as between she and Maister Alfred, and I've said it. And if I had not said it, but kept it in my mind, I should have been a thief and a liar."

The surprising vehemence with which this was said, added to the utter ignorance of what was meant by "two dashers," made Marian turn away to laugh. She walked to the open window, and left Mrs. Perran and the Doctor to ask questions. But calm Mrs. Angerstein only raised her head, and fixed her violet eyes on Jerry, who, having made his confession, stood there in all the courage of well-doing.

"Like my son?—like Mr. Bellingsby?"

"As two peas—one being a man, and t'other a woman, and both as handsome as handsome can be, and made me tremble to look at it," said Jerry.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Angerstein. "Did Mrs. Roche say why the tea is dearer this week than last?"

"Not a word—only said, as to our butter, other folks had raised one penny, but that we were never the first."

"Very well," said Mrs. Angerstein.

Then Jerry, bowing to all, departed, say-

ing he had to call some calves for old Joan to feed. When he was gone, Mrs. Perran said,

"What is the meaning of Jerry's news?"

"Indeed, I have no idea. But I like to have the poor fellow's confidence. We do not, however, reckon him among the wise men here."

Mrs. Perran said it was time to get home now, and they began to wish their friend good-bye.

"Alfred will pay his respects to the General as soon as he comes back; and I have been so occupied with my own affairs that I forgot to say I had received Sir Thomas's bride-cake."

"Lady Glaucott's bride-cake," said Dr. Perran, correcting his friend. "My mother has already rebuked me for that expression, and explained the whole theory of cake, gloves, veils, bridesmaids, and favours. I am glad to pass on a scrap of my newly-acquired knowledge before I go."

So they walked down the pebble pathway to the granite steps by which you descended to the orchard, and through the orchard got to the public road and the bridge. In the orchard they met Patty. The girls were friends. She was four years older than Marian, taller, and very elegant and gentle-looking. She stood there smiling, being one of the most merry-hearted of women, and showing her pretty regular teeth between her rosy lips; while her soft-toned voice rested like sweet music in the air. Warm with mounting the hill, she held a hat, with a long deep blue feather in it, hanging by the strings from her arm. Great masses of rich-coloured chestnut braids of hair were banded and twisted at the back of her head, and round it again like a crown. Patty's hair so soft and magnificent, and her smile so sweet, laughing, and thoroughly artless and good, were her chief beauties. It seemed to be a pleasant sight in Dr. Perran's eyes, and he

stayed behind to talk to her. When he joined his mother and Marian, he said,

"She knows about Jerry's 'dashers.' A lady and her daughter have arrived at the hotel. Mr. Garret Naylor brought them, and placed them there. It is sure to be right if Garret Naylor did it."

Everybody was proud of Mr. Garret Naylor, and he was believed in, like an article of faith. He had risen to an honourable position, having made a good beginning at Oxford. His father, a man representing the ancient gentry of Trevarna, seeing his talents, and rating rightly his natural gifts, had sent him to the University, hoping the best for his only son. All Trevarna and Portspadron knew, approved, and looked on; and Garret Naylor disappointed no one. He was now, at about six and thirty years of age, a barrister in full practice, and rising every year in the world's good opinion. There was already a widely-known intention of sending him to Parliament on the first

opportunity. Mrs. Perran began to talk about him.

"Yes, he is a remarkable man. In my father's time, my dear Marian, they were timber-merchants at Trevarna."

"How old he must be!" said Marian, who had left her ideas at Angersteins—"oh! I beg your pardon, their father, I suppose. Are there a great many of them?"

"In the old time there were two brothers of a good old family. They succeeded; and their descendants have succeeded. Mr. Garret Naylor is perhaps as rising a man as any now known in this country. The General would know about him."

"I have often heard his name," said Marian, meekly, feeling guilty of innocence concerning the affairs of Trevarna, and wishing to make amends. "I wonder what he has to do with those ladies."

"He has got Alfred his property," said Dr. Perran. "He was more delighted about it when I saw him than he would

have been if it had been his own. No doubt these ladies are part of the story."

"I am so glad to have heard Mrs. Angerstein's history," said Marian; "which was not so very dreadful, after all."

Dr. Perran laughed a short, amused, and wondering laugh.

"Sudden death—utter desertion—a fatherless child—and a life of labour. You young ladies are insatiable. But less than that would be enough for you, I think."

"Oh! I don't wish ever to be in the middle of a story," said Marian. "But if you hear any more, pray come and tell us."

"Yes, I will."

And so saying, they stopped before the entrance to the Groves, and took their leave of each other for the day.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. BELLINGSBY.

He was a tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branches wave;
And the root of this delightful tree
Was in her husband's grave.

WORDSWORTH.

IT was very seldom that anyone heard Mrs. Angerstein call her son anything else than "Mr. Bellingsby." In her world he stood by himself. Patty, little Lizzie, and sometimes, as by a mistake, Marian—these three called her son Alfred; and Mrs. Angerstein liked to hear them say so. But to her the name of her girlhood's husband was too sacred for common use. Mr. Angerstein and his pupils had called her son

"Bellingsby;" and she, in those days, had always spoken of him as "my son." But when Mr. Angerstein was dead, and her son was a man—at least, to look it—her sweet-toned "Mr. Bellingsby" was pleasant to hear; and it seemed to invest him with the consideration that she felt to be due to his birth.

This day, when by the departure of her friends she was left in the study alone, Mrs. Angerstein stood at the open casement window, and looked out, thinking about him, and also wondering over what Jerry had said of the two ladies at the hotel. As she was meditating, she saw Patty appear. She had come up the orchard, and had now reached the green turf outside the window. She caught sight of her step-mother, and her whole face became such a picture of gladness as no one could have seen without an answering smile. Mrs. Angerstein turned away, and in another moment she had got out on the gravel walk to meet Patty.

"My darling!" she said, and kissed her.

"Let us get out to the Ridge," said Patty. "He is coming. The *Martha* is in sight. But she must wait for the tide, they say."

Everything waited for the tide at Portspadron—even death itself, the sailors said.

So those two walked out into the sweet air, and into what might have been the warmth of a Summer sun. Butterflies were on the unfaded heath blossoms, and sporting amidst the fragrance of the golden gorse. Before them the blue level sea was spreading far away into the horizon, where a cloudless sky seemed to stoop to meet it. They could hear the music of its sighing on the sands that lay below.

"Have you heard who the ladies are of whom Jerry speaks?" She had told Patty all that had been said.

"I met Mr. Garret Naylor. He is very kind," said Patty. "He asked when Alfred would come in. I think he has sent out to him—he said Miss Clayford was here to

surrender him the property. I just saw them for a moment—I passed them near the bridge—they were going up to the Rough-ground, I thought."

"What do they look like? I am afraid I feel sorry for her," said Mrs. Angerstein.

"The younger one looked very nice. The elder one was small, with an unsteady step and an odd manner. I hear they have come from the other side of London. Peggy Denman told me; and I can't think where that is. The one I don't admire has a yellow bonnet, a mauve feather, and a white veil. She made a nervous thrust at me with a parasol covered with lace, and asked me if I knew where a person called Bellingsby lived, and I said, 'No,' so bravely you would have admired me, mother."

"My dear, how wrong!"

"No. Do you know where such a person lives? I am sure that I don't. If I were made to guess, I should say down in a cabin, or up at a mast-head, or in an orange

grove. I hope he will bring me a box of oranges this time. I like the *Portugalli*, very much."

"But you could have told them where *I* lived, and who you were."

"Ah! but they never asked me."

"And what will you say when you *do* see them, and when they know all that you would not tell?"

"I shall say to the wearer of the yellow bonnet that Mr. Bellingsby and I are engaged to be married."

Mrs. Angerstein laughed outright. It was very difficult for anyone not to laugh if Patty intended that they should. Patty looked very lovable, with her fair, broad, happy German face—such an idle face it was, as if this life had neither labour nor trouble in it, and as if she were quite incapable of understanding even the smallest measure of iniquity. Mrs. Angerstein kissed her. It was the natural consequence of looking at the great grey, wide-open, loving,

laughing eyes and the beautiful half-open mouth.

"My darling," she said again, "my son has chosen well."

Patty twined her arm round Mrs. Angerstein's waist, and turned her aside with a whisper, which informed her of the arrival of the strangers. Joan was guiding the lawyer, Mr. Garret Naylor, and two ladies to the walk on the Ridge, from which Mrs. Angerstein and Patty had been watching the sea.

"I must go and meet them," said Mrs. Angerstein.

Mr. Garret Naylor formally introduced Mrs. Clayford and her niece.

"Oh!" said the elder lady, looking at Patty with winking eyes, "you would not tell me that Mr. Bellingsby lived here."

"Did you ask for Mr. Bellingsby?" said Patty, with her happiest smile. "*I* live here."

Mrs. Angerstein interposed. Miss Clayford's eyes were fixed on Patty.

"My step-daughter, Miss Angerstein, stands on her own land, madam. The place is hers. My son, Mr. Bellingsby, has no settled home; his vessel, which you see yonder, waiting for high water, is the nearest thing to a home of his own which he at present possesses."

"Is he in the Navy?"

"No, madam. He is a possessor in part of a trading vessel. He trades through the Mediterranean, and with Spain and Portugal. It keeps him near me; and I could ill spare my man out of our house for any great length of time."

It was Mrs. Clayford's misfortune to look much more disagreeable than she really was. She was a small, thin, near-sighted woman, of over sixty years of age, with a little pinched face, that had once been pretty, a halting, hesitating step, a wiry voice, and a fidgety manner. But she was very fond of her niece, and allowed herself to be taken about the earth wherever that niece liked,

and on any errands that were suggested to her. She had been a widow more than twenty years, and had no near relations of her own, so she had devoted herself to Mary Clayford, always yielding to her wishes, and only claiming for herself the right to keep a running commentary of observation and argument, which made no impression on Miss Clayford, but drove Mr. Garret Naylor to despair. As Mrs. Clayford was gifted with the power of saying the wrong thing, she now used her gift to Mrs. Angerstein, speaking of her son.

"We hear him very well-spoken of," said the lady.

"Madam!" exclaimed Mrs. Angerstein.

The lady's little nervous face was overspread with confusion.

"Don't," whispered Miss Clayford, and then Mr. Garret Naylor spoke. He was a very pleasant person to look at, with an upright figure, a determined face, an honest countenance, and that sort of gently cour-

ageous manner which gets a man listened to.

"Let me make you better acquainted," he said. "This, Mrs. Angerstein, is Miss Clayford. She is the daughter of old Mr. Bellingsby's niece—that lady is by marriage her aunt. On Miss Clayford's inheriting the property, she chose to examine all papers for herself. You are aware that old Mr. Bellingsby outlived your friends at Blackdale Farm, and also their three sons.

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Angerstein.

She looked round at Patty, who came close to her, and placed her hand within her arm. Mrs. Clayford gave another of those movements which Patty had called a thrust, for she was not quite of Miss Clayford's opinion on the subject of the Bellingsby property; but she was not in a sufficiently active state of mind to venture upon saying so.

"Now speak for yourself, Miss Clayford," said the gentleman.

He stepped back, and she advanced a little, so as to stand immediately in front of Mrs. Angerstein, who said,

"Had we not better spare ourselves all this? I have no claim on any property. And as to my son, you are his friend—cannot, *ought not* all this to be said to him, and to him alone."

"No," said Miss Clayford. "It will all be said to him in a different way from this, and not by me. But I want *you* to understand; and I think I want you to like me, Mrs. Angerstein."

"Then do as you please, young lady. We have no objection to listen to you."

"You know that old Mr. Bellingsby outlived all the male heirs."

"No. He did not outlive my son."

"I beg your pardon, I mean all three of the sons of Mr. Bellingsby, of Blackdale Farm."

"Yes," said Mrs. Angerstein, once more.

"He outlived those brothers. His pos-

sessions were his own, and he did as he pleased. What he had, my mother inherited. But now listen to this."

With a perfectly calm face Mrs. Angerstein listened; with a face full of a devouring interest, with wide-open eyes and parted lips, as if every feature in her face were listening, Patty waited for Miss Clayford's coming words.

"That man became, late in his old age, the possessor of a property called Danesford Hall, under a will made when his next heir——"

"My father-in-law," said Mrs. Angerstein.

"And two of the sons were living. This property, which came to him so late in life, was entailed on male heirs, and could not be legally my mother's or mine, till such heirs had failed. My mother, believing that there were no male heirs, took the property, as the will provided, and two years ago, on her death, all that was hers

fell to me. I found two boxes, marked 'private,' which my mother—she was a widow when old Mr. Bellingsby died—had never examined. She often said that the trouble of examining them would one day fall on me. We never knew anything about your son. I was the first who ever read the correspondence which old Mr. Bellingsby had kept. The letters were tied up, and marked." Miss Clayford opened a small pocket-book, and read from its pages, "'Private correspondence with my relatives of Blackdale Farm, concerning the mortgage to me, and my final purchase of the estate; also concerning the boy Alfred's conduct regarding the servant-girl.' That was not a very inviting title-page," said Miss Clayford. "No one, I am sure, had opened it. I, however, before destroying the packet, determined on reading it. With other things, I found a letter from your husband's mother, not only declaring to the truth of a marriage, but also giving the

news of the birth of a son. You must remember that there was no entailed property at the date of those letters. When Mr. Bellingsby inherited the Danesford property, I suppose he was too old to remember the troubles and vexations of earlier days. But, supposing Alfred Bellingsby to be the boy whose birth was announced in those letters, the Danesford property is not mine, but his."

"If you will look at your own face in the glass after seeing him, you will have no doubt of his being a Bellingsby," said Mrs. Angerstein.

"And *you* must remember," said Mrs. Clayford, in the hardest and most petulant manner, "that there is no proof of your marriage."

"Hush! dear aunt. I have read the letter complaining of Mr. Bellingsby's conduct in destroying that page of the register. I have been to the church, and seen the torn page myself," said Miss Clayford. "When

I began my inquiries after you and your son, through our solicitor in London, I was introduced to this gentleman as being of this county, and likely to help us—through him I am here to-day."

"We had better go into the house," said Mrs. Angerstein. And she led the way with Miss Clayford.

"I think you are very hard with me, Mrs. Angerstein."

"It is a subject that concerns Mr. Bellingsby more than me. I should rather say that it concerns him alone. I never meddle with men's matters. This case need not be any exception. Mr. Bellingsby's is a strong nature, and he is an educated man. Neither am I going to insult you with praise. I am not surprised to find that a relation of my husband is a gentlewoman."

"And you are going to like me?"

"That is not a question for the future. When I first looked in your face, I liked

you; when I heard your voice, Miss Clayford——"

"No, call me Mary; and make Alfred like me. I claim him. He is my cousin. Danesford is beautiful; and I was born there. Can you pity me now?"

"No, child. Pity you! You are doing justice—pity you! What would be the possession of that, or any other place ten times better than Danesford, to the injury you would do your own soul by keeping what is *his?* You can't be serious when you ask for pity."

Mary Clayford looked into Mrs. Angerstein's quiet face, and admired its peace.

"Do you reserve all your pity for the wicked?" she asked.

"I pity suffering. But I could envy you."

"That is because you love your son, and can only see plainly what benefits him."

"Have you enough for the comforts of life without this Danesford?"

"Yes, I am sufficiently rich. My mother's means were ample."

"And are you sure that my son will be any happier with this property than he is now, on the deck of his vessel, beloved and successful?"

"I don't know," said Miss Clayford.

"All you *do* know is that to have kept it yourself would have been degradation here, and worse hereafter. I will keep my pity for myself and my son."

"But few people would talk as you do."

"I don't believe that wealth brings happiness. I have always laboured. I have brought up my son to labour. It is no doubt pleasant to have what we call an independence, enabling us to buy other people's labour, as a help to our own; but the idle lives of what we call the higher classes, I consider *accursed*," said Mrs. Angerstein. "It was that which fostered the pride in that tempestuous heart of your old uncle. It was the pride of the idle that killed my

husband and banished my son. It was through labour that I recovered strength of body and mind, and got him a good home, and a gentleman's education. He is all I ever wished to see him—stay, there he is!"

Alfred Bellingsby was meeting them; he was just coming out of the house, Jerry staying behind him on the doorstep, going through a series of gestures, all intended to express thanksgiving, with the tears in his eyes, and his words, "Oh! glory be, glory be!" coming forth on a trembling voice, with an unquestionable sincerity.

"What is the matter with that curious person?" asked Mrs. Clayford, taking an examining view of Jerry through an eye-glass.

Patty could bear her companion no longer; she passed Mrs. Angerstein quickly, and went up to Alfred, who stood still to receive her, and look into her face. How brilliant that young face was with tears and gladness, not anyone could tell.

"I can't bear it," she said, after having held his hand a moment. "All sorts of things are happening—I must go." And she rushed into the house, and, on her knees in the study, made a thanksgiving, not any truer than Jerry had made already, after which she ran to the back of the house to find Joan.

Joan was one of the best specimens of a class who always had so respected themselves as never to care about imitating those who have been described as above them. She was hard at work, dressed in a short stuff petticoat, and an upper garment which was confined round her waist by the apron-string.

"Do you know?" gasped Patty.

"Yes, dear." Then, deliberately wiping her hands and face, she held her arms open, and Patty dropped her head upon Joan's shoulder, and whether she laughed or wept, it would have been hard to tell.

"Have you seen him?"

"Mr. Bellingsby? Yes, my dear; he came in by the back way, and I've been expecting him for ever so long."

"And have you seen *them?*"

"Well, just with the corner of my eye. But I hold it to be the unmannerliest thing in life to go gazing after the quality."

By this time Mrs. Angerstein, leaning on her son's arm, had brought her guests into the study. Even Mrs. Clayford softened a little when there.

"You have, I hope, given proper attention to my note, Mr. Bellingsby?" said Mr. Garret Naylor.

"Oh, yes! What is mine is mine," said Alfred, giving a smile all round the room, which seemed to brighten the whole place, and pushing his dark waving hair off his sunburnt forehead. "But I am not going to law with anybody—certainly not with Miss Clayford."

"It will be little more than 'sign, seal, and deliver,'" she said, with a smile, and

trying to attract Alfred's attention; but he was looking round the room, and out of the window, in a vain search after the missing Patty, and it made Miss Clayford laugh. "You do not any of you care for money in this wonderful country," she said.

"I don't," answered Alfred, cheerfully. "I have no interest in up-the-country places, as we call them. If this property comes to me, I shall sell it."

"Then I will buy it."

"Oh! grand!—it's a bargain!" cried Alfred. "See, Mr. Naylor, we can settle it all in five minutes. But I am obliged to go. I'm very sorry, mother—I'll be back in a few hours."

And so, with some civil words, Alfred had left the room, and in a few minutes he had found Patty. Down on the beach, by the winding path at the edge of the Ridge, those two went with the speed and skill of foot which long and early practice made safe and easy. There they wandered, sat,

talked, and made over again the promise that they delighted to remember.

"Now go back, darling. I must get to Portspadron, and see the *Martha* once more before night."

CHAPTER V.

THE LADIES.

All rules of pleasing in this one unite,
Affect not anything in nature's spite.
Baboons and apes ridiculous we find;
For what? For ill-resembling human kind.
None are, for being what they are, in fault,
But for not being what they would be thought.

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

AT the hotel at Portspadron Mrs. Clayford and her niece were distinguished by the title of "the ladies." It was not worth anyone's while to remember their names. If anyone wished to enter on such personal matters, they were asked what use it was to be so particular—they were foreigners—"we call them the ladies!" And at Portspadron the ladies were taken very

good care of, and accommodated with everything of the best. So Mrs. Trethewry said —and what she said no one disputed, for had she not been nurse at the General's, and had not her husband been in the Army with Sir Thomas himself? and was she not a representative of the old Spentyryons, and a far-away cousin to the learned and delightful Mr. Garret Naylor?

Mrs. Trethewry, though by no means an old woman, stood in a motherly position to all the youthful heroes and heroines of her native place; and in the three young men belonging to Rosdew, the Grove, and Angersteins, she positively delighted. She watched over and advised them; after any absence she blessed them, and, to put it respectfully, *they* kissed *her*, and her prophecies of good for each one of them were enough to encourage more diffident personages than those she had to deal with. They had each of them that sufficient amount of self-confidence which is necessary to success,

and even the great Mr. Congreve might have approved of their manners.

While Mrs. Trethewry had been, as their dear old Amy, nurse, and finally housekeeper at the Groves, she had known Alfred Bellingsby and Charley Grandison as well as "her own children," to use her own language, and her husband's acquaintance with Charley at Rosdew justified her excellent opinion of him. Yet, at the bottom of their hearts, in spite of their gratified pride in the two grand young gentlemen, they had had a peculiar liking for Alfred Bellingsby, as coming nearer their own position, and being yet a well-educated man.

There were few secrets at Portspadron. People knew a good deal of each other's affairs, and it may be truly said that they bore each other's burdens, in a way of their own which was much to the credit of the community.

Mr. Garret Naylor had felt no scruple in saying that Miss Clayford was resigning the

north-country property to the true heir. He had smoked a conversational pipe with Mr. Trethewry, and gone freely into "ins and outs" with his wife; and Mr. Trethewry had, in consequence, stood bare-headed as Mrs. and Miss Clayford passed him; and Amy had blessed them both with tears in her eyes, and with silent acknowledgments that it did her good to look at them.

"Ill news flies fast," says the proverb, but it is not saying too much for Portspadron to declare that good news always flew faster there. Mary Clayford walked about the little fishing town, and the women curtsied, and the homely, "My sarvice to you," was said to her by boys and men. It was to her a new experience, and a very pleasant one. So, after her return from Angersteins, and the wandering walk that followed after luncheon, she sat in Mrs. Trethewry's long room, in the bow-window at the end of it, looking out, idly gazing, and idly wondering over the strangeness of the people they had got among.

She felt how they noticed her, and she knew why they respected her; but she was a woman of great singleness of heart, and she had no self-laudation about her. She was very fond of Danesford—fond of the trees and flowers, the rocky moorland and the wooded hill-sides; fond of streams and meadows, and of the people she had known through all her life. But she did not care for it as property—its value was of no consideration to her; she had no love of great wealth, though she knew how to be thankful for the affluence that was her own. It did not cost her a single pang to give up to Mr. Bellingsby what was undoubtedly his own; but she was sorry to say good-bye to so much that was associated with her life and her affections. She was thinking of all this as she sat there looking out, above the elm-trees to the sea, where a fleet of fishing-boats were anchored, heaving with the tide, and casting broken shadows on the waves.

"I hope he will not sell it. I hope he will live there and love the people. I wonder if he could love anything so thoroughly inland."

"What are you so thoughtful about?" said Mrs. Clayford, suddenly interrupting her niece's meditations. She spoke pettishly, as was her way sometimes; but Mary loved her aunt, and understood her—indeed, she was in a sense sorry for her, because it was a great trial to Mrs. Clayford to give up Danesford. She had always liked being aunt to a great heiress, and to find herself aunt to a young woman with thirty thousand pounds in the Funds was a very different thing. "Anybody might have that," she had said contemptuously; "but Danesford!"

There was no disputing with her. She was not a woman of any mental power. She was vexed. And if she felt vexed, of course somebody had vexed her; and that person was responsible for some undiscover-

ed guilt; and as she could not bring the delinquent to justice, she wished that somebody had never been born; and of course he ought not to have been born. And this confused sort of argument led to the conclusion that Mrs. Angerstein's first marriage was an unprincipled thing, and herself a very objectionable person.

"Of course it must be so—about Danesford, I mean; and if he is the male heir—but you will find it out one day, Mary, and then you'll believe me, my dear."

"Yes, aunt," said Miss Clayford, meekly, not having any idea what she was meant to believe. "Here is Mr. Bellingsby—he is coming into the court."

"Such a remarkably odd hotel, with a pebbled courtyard and great myrtles," said Mrs. Clayford. "I must say everything is exceedingly odd; and Mr. and Mrs. Trethewry, with their old-fashioned, pleasant respectfulness—I must say it is nice—very gratifying, of course. And I *have*

thought that you might marry him, Mary."

"Who?—Mr. Trethewry? They don't marry more than one wife at a time here, aunt."

"Mr. Bellingsby," said Mrs. Clayford, with slow decision, intending to put an end to Mary's light-minded observations.

"Hush! I am opening the window." Then, glancing back at her aunt, "I would rather not marry him—he is younger than I am." And immediately, looking from the open window, she said, "Oh! yes—do come up to us. You know the way, of course."

Going to the door, she welcomed Alfred.

"What are you going to do this afternoon?" he asked. "It is the loveliest weather. Will you have a walk? I can show you some fine scenery not half a mile off, if you will have me for a guide."

"Will you come?" Mary asked of Mrs. Clayford; but that lady did not wish for any more walking.

"Miss Angerstein is talking with Mrs. Trethewry. If you will go with me in a boat, and row round the *Martha*, she will go too. You have been on the sea, I suppose?"

Mary laughed.

"Oh! yes. Shall I go?"

Mrs. Clayford, to whom she had spoken, said, condescendingly,

"Do as you please, my dear;" and so Mary left Alfred with that lady, while she got herself ready. He stood before Mrs. Clayford and began to speak.

"Since I saw you this morning I have seen Mr. Garret Naylor. I met him by accident. I have only just left him. I was glad to talk to him about this property. I learn from him, with great regret,"—he said the words with such an emphatic ring of sincerity in them, that Mrs. Clayford looked at him through her eye-glass, much as she had looked at Jerry that morning, but Alfred only smiled, and did not feel the

least disconcerted—"I learn, with regret which I can't describe, that I am undoubtedly the owner of Danesford, and that I am not able in my lifetime to sell it or give it away. If I die unmarried, or without a son, I can leave it away; but that the terms of the will under which I inherit are positive and precise."

"Yes, sir, I am aware of that," said Mrs. Clayford, stiffly. "All that you have to be grateful for is that we take for granted all about Mrs. Angerstein's marriage."

"No," said Alfred; and now Mrs. Clayford felt, perhaps for the first time, that she had found her match, "I have no need to show any gratitude to Miss Clayford for what she has *not* done. My grandmother's letters, a memorandum left by the good old clergyman who married my parents, and the evidence of two existing witnesses to the tearing up the register, have been pronounced sufficient proof of the marriage; and of my being the son of that marriage

there is also proof in my mother's possession. I am not going to take any gift from Miss Clayford. I am going to law with her."

Mrs. Clayford positively jumped in her chair. She clasped her hands, and muttered to herself, "They will believe me when it is too late." Alfred could scarcely help laughing.

"It is all planned by Mr. Garret Naylor. It will be a make-believe sort of business, in order to settle everything now, once for all, immediately on the discovery and the perfecting of the evidence. It would not be pleasant for my son, if I have one, to rise up and take from her children by force what ought to have been surrendered to me. There is no other way out of it. You can't extinguish rights, you know. And so let us be friends," and Alfred held out his hand. "My mother is an excellent woman, a woman you would value, Mrs. Clayford, if you would learn to know her. You were harsh to her to-day. If the law does not

confirm the fact of my being their son, I shall not get Danesford—and I don't want Danesford. Here is Miss Clayford coming. Will you take me for your friend—and will *you* be *my* friend? Pray don't visit me with your displeasure."

She had put her little, thin, white, rather bony, and much bejewelled hand in his, and there was a crying tremor in her voice as she asked him why he said all that to her.

"Because you are wanted to be our friend —my friend, my mother's friend; because it is no use to set your face against justice—even though it bores you as badly as it does me. Mr. Garret Naylor told me to talk to you—to conciliate you. I think he is anxious that you should understand. I am a horrible blunderer. I never had to explain or to conciliate before in my life," said Alfred. "I wish you'd like me, Mrs. Clayford." She looked up into his bronzed face, and met his honest and beseeching eyes. It made her laugh.

"I think I shall like you," she said. "And so you are going to have an amicable suit? And Mr. Garret Naylor has spoken of me as a talkative woman, likely to be a disagreeable guest at Danesford, if I am not conciliated. Don't interrupt me; I know. Yes, I have been very angry with him—more angry than I shall ever be with you. I thought that the shortest way would have been to put all the bundle of letters in the fire."

"But that would not have burnt *me*," said Alfred.

"No, that was what he said; and he spoke of her children losing everything, and having to pay up arrears of rent, and being utterly beggared—so ridiculous, when they are not born! But he would have it all settled directly, encouraged Mary dreadfully, declared that to arrange with you, and give the property up, would be to her advantage, apart from the question of right and wrong, which was all that *I* thought

of," said Mrs. Clayford, with triumphant forgetfulness of her confessed desire to ignore the will, and burn the documents. "That was all that I thought of, as dear Mary knows; and of course, as I have always thought, if everybody was properly married and born, then there's no more to be said."

"Yes, that is it exactly," said Mary, kissing her aunt, who was still holding Alfred's hand, and looking up into his face, which was smiling on her with a delighted attention.

"And he is a Bellingsby," Mrs. Clayton went on to say, "particularly about the mouth, which is your great fault, Mary, but it is better in a man than a woman, and your dear mother often said the same." She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and hid the genuine tears which came as a relief to her kind heart, which felt heavy with the crimes against Mr. Garret Naylor which Alfred's words had brought to her remem-

brance; and, in truth, she had driven that legal-minded man half distracted by the persistent, unreasonable opposition which she had at first offered to her niece and to himself.

Mr. Garret Naylor entertained a remarkable fear of a woman's tongue, even when it uttered that which he could comprehend; but towards Mrs. Clayton he felt an indescribable sort of vague dread lest she should really be talking sense, which he had become incapable of understanding. She talked nonsense with a perfection and pertinacity which made him distrust himself; so, in his instructions to Alfred, he had been positive and energetic.

"Make friends with her, if you can. Rule her—conciliate her." And then, in the abruptness of an unhesitating candour, he had said, "Gag her—do anything to keep her quiet. There is no room for any doubt as to your succession, but she could talk a man out of his senses."

So Alfred had gone to Mr. Trethewry's to try his powers of pleasing on the lady; and, having shown himself for that which he was, he had succeeded in pleasing her. One last word from Mr. Garret Naylor had given him courage and determination.

"We can't be married till it is all settled. Miss Clayford is my own property, mind. She was my ambition years ago, when I hardly dared speak to her. Then she was brought to me about this, and we grew to be friends, and more. She is a noble creature. Keep our secret; but she told me to tell you, if a fitting opportunity came. I believe I was jealous of you," he said.

"I am in love with my *Martha*," said Alfred, laughing. But the other, thinking only of the vessel, said,

"Oh, your time will come. I brought her here, that she might not only see you, but know all about myself."

These words came thus suddenly on Alfred Bellingsby, and they brought a very

welcome revelation to him. Those people of Portspadron, and of the town, Trevarna, which seemed to belong to them, as if each existed for the other, were so much *one* in their interests that to find Miss Clayford was to become of their community was most welcome. He felt as if he could now love her himself, after some fashion with which Mr. Garret Naylor need not quarrel; and he expressed all the gratification he felt very earnestly. He inquired if he might talk to her about it; and he was allowed to talk as much as the lady would permit, provided it was not in the presence of the aunt.

So Alfred had gone to the hotel, to induce Mary Clayford to come where he could claim her as belonging to Portspadron, and congratulate himself in her presence as much as he pleased. He had met Patty, and detained her; and he had then had the interview just described with Mrs. Clayford. But he had exceeded the time allowed

by Patty, and she now sent word that she could not wait. She had gone back to Angersteins, and he had persuaded Mrs. Clayford to go with them.

"Just a short way—just to the cliffs, to watch the changing lights of the sunset on the shifting waves."

The kind-hearted woman, quite in a state of gentle excitement after an interview which had made friends of herself and Alfred, came to them carefully shawled; and she was watched by Mr. Trethewry picking her way, with a bent head, across the pebble-paved court, with uncertain steps and examining eyes, "As if she was picking out the soft stones to tread upon," he said, laughing. "But look at her niece—she has the steady step and open face; she holds her head like a brave one. She is Justice and Good Intentions all over; and I am by no means thinking that Mercy is left out. There, did I not say so? She stops to speak to poor Hester, and the other goes by

nervously, as if she were afraid to look poverty and trouble in the face. I wonder what Hester has got to say to them."

This Hester was a sad-looking creature. She was the bad blot on the Portspadron society. She was not old—forty-two or forty-three; and she had been a beauty once. She stood in their way, and looked Alfred full in the face.

"You are bound to do your best for him," she said; "and I saw you pass by, and followed you to ask it of you. Do your best by him, Mr. Bellingsby, for the Lord might have had mercy on him before now, if it had not been for you."

"I know," said Alfred. "I have heard it already. But I am bound to nothing, remember. What I do, I do for love, and not from any feeling that I am bound to do for your son more than I am bound to do for any man who wants my help, and tells me so."

"I don't like to hear you speak so," she

said, fixing great anxious luminous dark eyes on him, with a wild sort of despair in them, which made Mary interested in her at once. "You gave him life, Mr. Bellingsby, and you'll have to be afraid for that life before you die."

"Not I," said Alfred, with the careless ease of manner that belonged to him. "His life, and what happens in it, is *his* concern. And Dick would rather die in earnest, without hope of recovery, than injure *me*."

"That's how his heart is; and you speak true. But if you had let him be, and not brought the breath back to his body as he lay there lifeless, he would not have had this last trouble to answer for. And but for you he would neither have sinned nor suffered more. You can't deny it. You are for ever tied up to his life, for that which he now lives you gave to him. You can't help it. Come good or evil, it will come because of you. Do your best for him, or you will rue it, Mr. Bellingsby.

He can't part himself from you, and you'll do your best for him now. I call upon you to do it," she said, in a voice that had something most touching and tragic in its tone, and for just one instant her whole figure seemed to rise into a threatening grandeur of attitude which made Mary shrink away with a sensation of fear.

"If he is out of gaol—is he?"

"Yes; the year was up yesterday."

"If so, and if he would like it, I could get Captain Tricketts to take him on his next trip. He goes to Smyrna. I'll send, or go up myself in the *Martha*, and see Dick at Plymouth—will that do? He can lead an honest life as well as any man, if he chooses, and if you will help him. His mother's house should be a pride and a blessing to him. Nobody could do all that better than you, Hester."

"Hold thy peace about that!" she said eagerly—"'tis what you know nothing

about. Yes, get thee up there. Ask at the 'Mariner's.'"

"I know."

"And go thyself, and say his mother blesses him, and bids him go. There'll be money wanted—wilt thou give it, Mr. Bellingsby?"

"No; I don't like to go on being made responsible for Dick. I have done enough," said Alfred.

"And a great fortune comes to you, and you will not help my boy! Is it true? Do you dare to take it, and he in want?—and when you know that every pain he suffers, and every deed he does, he has to thank you for!"

"I think you are behaving shamefully, and if you were a man instead of a woman, I'd prove my words," said Alfred. "Dick is wiser than you are. I make you no promise. I shall get up and see Dick to-morrow. Good-bye."

But by this time Mrs. Clayford had come

to them, and with a scared face, by the help of the eye-glasses, she was trying to comprehend the situation. The woman was talking fast and furiously, vexed at not getting a promise out of Alfred.

"There were different lots in this world," she said, "but there was but one heaven for all."

"What an insolent woman!" said Mrs. Clayford; and Alfred laughed.

Hester rushed away, gathering up her tattered garments, and was out of sight in a moment.

CHAPTER VI.

MORE FRIENDS.

O'er the bed of Eric's lake
Slumbers many a water-snake,
Basking in the web of leaves
Which the weeping lily weaves.

MOORE.

"DEAR me, Mr. Bellingsby, are there many of those—those?"—Mrs. Clayford had no fitting word at her command by which she could describe the woman who had just left them.

"No, not many," said Alfred, with a sad sort of smile; for Hester was a woman whom he helped and pitied, and to whom his good mother extended unlimited patronage; and though it was impossible not to

give a smile to Mrs. Clayford's inquiries, he had nothing but pity in his heart for her who was the object of them. "Hester is not as bad as she seems; she has had a miserable life, and has battled hard with a thankless son, who has destroyed with more certainty than she could contrive to gather together; but, of course, she has loved him through all, and loved him the better the less he deserved it—for which may God bless her!" And Alfred lifted his hat as he spoke, as one who had made a prayer, and stood bare-headed to do it.

"But that is unreasonable, and unreasonable things are wrong, as I have always said —dear Mary knows it, I am sure," said Mrs. Clayford, looking round for aid in the desperate adventure of a dispute with Mr. Bellingsby.

"But there is a better thing than reason," said Alfred, quietly.

"I am surprised and sorry to hear you say so," said Mrs. Clayford. "When I was

bringing up Mary—her mother trusted her greatly to me—I always said, 'Now, dear child, *be reasonable.*' Generally I found it enough. You would not have wished her corrected in any other way. I have always set my face against personal chastisement—beating, in fact," said Mrs. Clayford.

"So have I," said Alfred. "Perhaps they beat Dick Sanson. And if you had beaten Miss Clayford she might have become—making allowance for difference of station—a sort of Hester."

"You talk singularly," said Mrs. Clayford, with the air of being just a very little offended.

"And pray what is better than *reason?*" asked her niece, with a smile.

"Faith," said Alfred. Hester had faith in Dick, and worked for that young sinner again and again. And he took to better ways, and went a long voyage, and brought her home money and goods. Then Hester, who was never over-wise, made him mad

ith over-praise, and over-care and he
ound himself once more in bad company,
and was again the curse of the poor home.
Just at that time he was out with the seine-
boats, and one day, when Patty and I were
fishing with Jerry, whom you have seen, in
my small boat, we heard a terrible cry from
the men with the nets, and Dick was in the
water. It was hard work to save him; he
had sunk, as we thought, for the last time,
but Jerry had taken the oars, and Patty the
helm, and I, being in the water, got a grasp
at the poor fellow, and holding on to our
little boat, I got him to the beach; but
Dick they said was dead. Dead they
vowed he was, and as dead they left him.
But Patty and I worked hard in that warm
corner against the rocks, where we had g
him, and Jerry made fast the boat, a
went for Dr. Perran, and such things as
thought that we wanted. I do not th
there could have been any sin in lea
Dick for dead. Some people had go

his mother, and said that he was drowned, and promised to bring him to her. But drowned men are recovered sometimes, and Patty and I had it on our consciences to do our best. I shall never forget Patty. She had such a scared white, terribly earnest face. And she worked away as I taught her, without uttering one word, but with her heart full of prayers, as I, who knew her so well, could plainly see. It was truly like handling the dead, and we were a long time there alone. I had brandy, and the bundle of rugs and blankets, which I always kept for night work, had been put in the boat. The blessed sun was just what we wanted, and after a time—longer than I could have believed, but for the striking of the General's clock—we thought that life was beating in the man's breast; the thought came to both at the same moment, for we looked into each other's eyes, but we never spoke.

"At last, like life coming back to a corpse,

it came, with a choke, a half breath, a movement. 'Thank God!' whispered Patty. By the time the doctor arrived Dick was sitting up and breathing, with his frightened eyes opening and shutting like one who neither knew where he had been, nor where he was. Now this giving back of his life to Dick Sanson, his mother—partly from superstition, and partly to get what she wants—makes into a reason for my taking charge of the rest of his life; you heard what she said. And, to tell the whole truth, there is a great prejudice against recovering a man from drowning, after, as they say, he is dead. Of course he was *not* dead. Though they are right in saying he would have died if we had let him alone."

"It is the old story, I suppose," said Mary; "that he will live to injure you."

"I don't know that they attach anything very specific to what they say—*it's unlucky*—that is the idea. We believe in luck; but what we mean by luck, not the wisest of us

can tell. However, a year ago, not long after, as Hester says, I had given him back his life, he got into trouble, and he has been in gaol ever since, which, as Hester argues, is all my fault; so that comes of making a hero of myself by saving a fellow-creature's life at the risk of my own."

"And it *is* very puzzling," argued Mrs. Clayford. "These crimes he would not have committed, supposing, of course, that he was dead. It was a great responsibility; and *I* should not have known what to do, which is a great comfort; and, indeed, I would not advise anyone to learn. Those are most difficult questions, and what I mean to say, dear Mary, is that they are better let alone."

"Yes, aunt," said her niece, meekly; but giving just one glance towards Mr. Bellingsby, who, however, did not appear to be listening.

"There!—listen!" he cried. And they heard words uttered in a loud, musical,

chaunting cry, repeated again and again. "Now, through this gate. Let me help you up this bit of stony road, Mrs. Clayford, to the top of that knoll—there, you see the bay before you—hark!"

Again and again came the same musical cry.

"That is the huer's call—he says, 'Ports-padron ahoy!' He sees fish—pilchards—in the bay. There they are—that dark place in the water, like a great cloud-shadow to *your* eyes. But there is no cloud; and if there was, no huer here would be deceived by it. He has claimed the fish for the people who own the nets and boats to which he belongs. There are other huers on the coast. Now, see."

Passing them ran three men—they were over the hedge, across the field, down the cliff, and to the little pier in what Alfred called "no time." There again! Looking across to the Ridge, they saw them running down the steep; and at the same moment

two lads, touching their caps, sped past them with light, fleet steps.

"Good luck!—good luck!" repeated Alfred.

"What does it all mean?" asked Mrs. Clayford.

"It means that they are going to have one of their latest and finest catches for the season, I hope. Those boats you were watching this morning so lazily rocking away, were all ready for this moment. The huer's cry brought down the men who belonged to them. From where you sit, in the bow window, you may watch the whole process of the great seine, and the tuck-net; and when the night comes, you may see the fish taken up in baskets and filling the boats, looking like molten silver in the moonlight—the most glorious sight you ever beheld!"

"But," said Mrs. Clayford, "it is always so much more respectable to do things by day; and better for the health. I was told

some most curious things about that by a learned physician once; but I am very glad to have seen all that running. The men here always looked lazy to me. And now I know the meaning of that man who is always standing about on the cliff. You should certainly never judge by appearances. Thank you, Mr. Bellingsby. I'll go back now. If you will help me down the slope, I can find my way. I often walk as far as that trickling little stream which comes out of the rock imbedded in that hedge. Thank you. Don't trouble about me now."

But Mary and Alfred Bellingsby walked home with her, and then they walked up and down the pebbly path in Mrs. Trethewry's garden, to speak of Mr. Garret Naylor.

"I am so extremely glad," said Alfred; "it is like making you one of us. He belongs to Portspadron, though the timber yards were at Trevarna; and his father and uncle went to live there."

"And he is a far-away cousin of Mrs. Trethewry," said Mary.

"Who was the last of the Spentiryans," said Alfred. "A great family; and she is worthy of her name. We don't dislike labour, nor do we see anything degrading in earning our bread. Amy can't wear as fine a gown as Lady Reinecourt, but she has perhaps a better pedigree."

"I wonder how long all this will last. It is like a dream. I am glad to see you all before you are spoilt—while you are still beyond railways. I know Lord and Lady Reinecourt very well. It was at their house I first saw Mr. Naylor. We liked each other at once; and he took more than four years to tell me so."

"And why?" asked Alfred. "We are generally quicker at our work than that."

"It was because of his work—he kept his pleasure waiting on it. He would make himself great enough in the world's eyes before he asked to become agreeable in

mine. But I could have married him *then* as easily as *now*. I like work; and I hate idleness. I enjoy a struggle, of all things, when success can be kept fairly in view. I tell him it was all pride. He was frightened at my thirty thousand pounds. But I was never made to sit still and feel the weight of idleness. And you won't rust out when you have Danesford?" she said anxiously.

"I'll go to the North Pole," said Alfred; "that is, if Patty will let me. We are exchanging confidences, Miss Clayford."

"How delightful! And she is educated, and all that?"

"Miss Angerstein? She knows Latin, and delights in Algebra! She talks French, German, and Spanish. She draws—didn't you see her drawings? They are wonderful! And she plays on all kinds of musical instruments."

"How much of that is true?"

"All, and more—a great deal more. Her

father was made up of learning; her mother was a most accomplished woman. I wonder that Patty did not die of it all. She knew more at thirteen than other people at thirty. It is a part of the creed of Portspadron that Miss Angerstein is perfection."

"I have no reason for withholding faith," said Mary. "I assure you I believe it all perfectly already; and I am very glad, for dear Danesford's sake. But, speaking of creeds, there is no church here."

"It is nearly four miles off, on a most dangerous part of the coast. It stands in the midst of a small hamlet called Hecklas, which has a belt of stunted oak and ash all round it. Once the tower, which is out of all proportion to the church, was lighted at night, and served as a beacon for mariners. And it does good service still when it can be seen by day. To Hecklas those persons go who like it, and those who have conveyances to use; but the people at Portspadron are self-sufficing in those, as in other mat-

ters, and they have built a chapel for themselves. There is a great deal of religion among these people in their own simple-minded way."

"Is Hecklas the name of a local saint?" asked Mary.

"No—it is an abbreviation of Theckla, a saint powerful in the hour of death, in storm and shipwreck; but whether she helped me to get Dick Sanson back to life, I can't say. He certainly seems in want of intercession."

"Would it do him good to send him money?" asked Mary. "I am very much interested about his mother. Will you take him money from me?"

"No, thank you. Not now. But when he has honestly earned one pound, it might do him good to give him another. But who is this?—there is a proverb which comes very often true, and is so now once more."

And there before them stood Dick Sanson himself. Alfred held out his hand.

"I have been to Angersteins," said Dick; "and madam sent me here."

It was the custom of the labouring class so to call Mrs. Angerstein. Mr. Angerstein's first wife, who had talked English very imperfectly, had always been called so, and the title had descended to his widow, and was in common use amongst the poor.

"Have you seen your mother?"

"No, sir. Mother's too much for a body sometimes. I thought I'd plan a bit of life before I went to her, that I might have a straight story in my mouth."

"And what have you done?"

"I've undertook the digging of the new ground behind the house, sir. Madam gave it to me in a minute. And I'm going to speak to the cap'en of our seine—I shall be taken on as I was last year. That's a place for a week or two. Will you get me a berth next voyage, Mr. Bellingsby? I expect I'm lucky. I wasn't born to be drownded, that's clear."

Dick smiled a broad, quiet, eloquent smile, and showed a row of such beautiful pearly teeth as would have distinguished any man. He was a fine youth, not more than twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, clad in the sailor's coarse blue dress, with a wide-open clear grey eye, and plenty of light hair. He did not look the least like the irredeemable evil one which some people supposed him to be, and whom no human law could keep in order.

"My mother's always right," said Alfred; "but the time will come, if you don't take care, when even she will not be able to help you."

"And I'm but a poor hand to help myself," said Dick.

"You are as fine a fellow as ever trod shoe-leather," said Alfred.

Suddenly, quite overcome, to Mary Clayford's great surprise, Dick turned his head away, hid his face in his rough sleeve, and sobbed aloud. It was over in a moment;

and when he looked round, his face was covered with smiles, though tears were on his cheek.

"I wasn't guilty, maister, this last time—I wasn't indeed. I was not even drunk. I was all sober and right. But I was among 'em, and we all got condemned in a heap."

"Very well—I'm very glad of it. You will learn to keep better company. And if a man is to suffer, it is better to suffer innocently. I tell you, Dick, that we have each of us *one* enemy, and *no more than one*—that is our own self. No man can be betrayed into crime if he does not give up his own will to the betrayer. I'll take your word that you were innocent of the actual crime for which you had your punishment. I have promised to speak to Captain Tricketts, to take you as a good hand on board his vessel on her next trip. It is for Smyrna. Now get home to your mother."

And Dick disappeared at the word of command, with ready obedience.

"Good night," said Alfred, to Mary Clayford. "My time is up. Madam, as they call my mother, is never kept waiting at tea-time."

In this way Mrs. and Miss Clayford began to make acquaintance with Portspadron and its people; but their knowledge was to be immediately enlarged. The next day brought Dr. Perran and his pretty mother, and an intimation from General Harcourt, in Marian's hand-writing, that he would do himself the honour of calling, with Mrs. Harcourt, on Mrs. Clayford and her niece in the afternoon, if they would allow them the pleasure of their acquaintance, with no further introduction than was thought sufficient in that remote corner of the kingdom.

Mrs. Clayford—"gratified, of course,"—replied that she should be at home and waiting; so about three o'clock the General's carriage and well-known cream-colour-

ed ponies stood still by Mrs. Trethewry's myrtles, and the one-armed hero, leaning on Marian, with his wife by his side, in a delightful little complimentary address, made them welcome to Portspadron. He held a letter in his hand. That morning he had received a request from Lord Reinecourt, to make himself agreeable to his friends.

CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDS ALL ROUND.

> How dost thy cares in generous visions melt,
> And dream of goodness thou hast never felt.
>
> COLERIDGE.

BEFORE another week had passed, Mary Clayford felt herself to be no longer a stranger, but an adopted daughter in Portspadron. She knew most of the people by name; she took early rambles by herself; she had heard a good deal of strange talk from Hester Sanson, and much melancholy musing from her son, on whose path temptations fell fast, like Autumn leaves, and, from the want of some more exciting occupation, he stopped in his way to make

game with them. She was welcome always at Angersteins, and she had adopted the villagers' style, and called its mistress by the familiar title of Madam. It had been always used for Mr. Angerstein's first wife, and he, of venerated memory, had used the same for his second. It had grown now into an expression of respectful affection, keeping the remembrance of the husband alive, while it gave dignity to his widow. So while Alfred and Patty called her mother, Mary Clayford spoke to her, and of her, as Madam, in a pretty, playful way, which pleased them all.

Mrs. Angerstein loved and admired her in her simple, openly-expressed, grave way. "She is a good girl, with a pure heart, and a straight eye to truth and justice. Garret Naylor has found his crown."

At the Groves Mrs. Clayford was exceedingly popular. There was a refinement and a ceremonious courtesy about her which showed well in congenial company. She

worshipped the one-armed old General, and paid her best compliments to his well-appointed wife.

Somehow, Mrs. Harcourt never seemed to be more than a piece of furniture brought to wonderful perfection. The General still gave the word of command, and arranged the actions of life; and she obeyed with a precision that was absolutely perfect. Of the work of life she never did anything. Marian was her father's right hand in all ways; with unquestioning obedience she did his bidding, but not by any means like a machine; it was her human skill in giving beauty and consistency to his wishes that made her so incalculably valuable to him. Her quick sense of the ends for which he worked made her choose right moments and right means; and when rich and poor spoke of General Harcourt as one who knew the best thing to be done, and did it in the best way, and who had the noble art of conferring a favour as if he were asking

one, they described him as that which he really was, but which he could never have shown himself to be, had not his daughter brought about the fulfilment of his intentions with a sensibility and graciousness which were entirely her own.

In everything he was Marian's debtor, and she gloried in the thought that he did not know it. She wrote all his letters generally from his dictation, but never when she wished him to be most popular, or, for any cause, to touch a matter with an exceptionally tender hand. Only in one thing had he any secrets from her. She kept his accounts, setting down their expenses in such general terms as were sufficient for him, and entering accurately every sum of money he received. But he would not talk to Marian about money. "Send your mother here, my dear. I am not going to employ your hand to-day." Then she knew that money was to be spoken of, and beyond the knowledge that they were

in affluent circumstances, as the abundance of every day most assuredly proved, Marian Harcourt's ignorance of the mysteries of pounds, shillings, and pence was most poetically complete.

To Mary Clayford Marian was a new study. The woman of eight and twenty and the girl of seventeen are in different worlds always. They draw nearer as they grow older; but the difference between girlhood and womanhood was strongly marked between these two—they were acquaintances, but not companions.

"She is so tied up to her old father that there is no getting at her," Mary said. "I can't have the one without the other. I think she has no existence of her own, and I don't quite understand it."

Alfred, to whom this was said, answered her quickly:

"There is not a better girl in the world. Trust her! We all trust Miss Harcourt."

But Mary Clayford had, however, an inte-

rest in Marian's eyes which she little guessed at. Of all the people in the Portspadron world she alone had seen the coming Lady Glaucott. Marian gave many meditations to the unseen lady. She had had, for so long, a sort of possession in Rosdew, and she could not relinquish her rights without entertaining a small sorrow of her own in the midst of the universal gladness.

During the whole term of Sir Thomas's absence she had had free leave and licence to go where she pleased, and do as she liked at Rosdew. The old servants left in charge were her devoted admirers, and she had met Mr. Angerstein and Charley there when she was scarcely more than a child, and gone with them over every corner of the estate, and with Mrs. Meadows, the housekeeper, over every part of the house. She had been talked to by Mr. Angerstein of the books, the pictures, and the men who had given the fruits of their study and genius to the world.

Rosdew had been a school of learning to her, presided over by the most fascinating of masters. Charley Grandison occupied her heart, and Mr. Angerstein filled her brain. Both grew rapidly in knowledge under this double teaching; and she had learnt more in her holidays, and her home-life at the Groves, than anyone had taught her in the school at Amiens.

Charley had gone, and by another road, never to be retraced, Mr. Angerstein had left them also; but these departures had only made Marian's empire at Rosdew a more perfect possession. The earliest flowers were found for her, and she fell heiress naturally to innumerable little pains and pleasures connected with the place. Also she wrote letters to Sir Thomas, and Charley made many most excellent excuses for writing to her. He was always her very affectionate friend, as much as they had been when quarrelling over the arrangements of wives and husbands belonging to their Noah's

Ark, but never by any word to her, either written or spoken, was he a lover; but she loved him with all her heart, and never, at that date in her story, did she suppose that she could ever love anyone else.

But Charley had told Herbert, and Herbert, like the wise man that, even in his boyhood, he actually was, had never, by sign, word, or action, told again. Herbert thought it would have been a very proper match for his sister, if Charley had had money; as it was, he thought she might do better; and, if Charley were ordered abroad, he felt that she probably would. He loved Charley too well to vex him. He shrunk from uttering a single word that might in the smallest degree separate them from each other. He kept that silence which is *not* consent, and waited for the end, unpledged by his friend's confidence, and with no more thought of his sister than if she had been made of marble or carved in wood.

Herbert was a wise man. He himself

knew nothing of sentiment at the time now spoken of. He habitually made himself generally agreeable, and everybody admired and liked him. In his own family he was the very model of gentlemanly perfection. His father felt humbly obliged to him for being so superior to other men; and his mother blindly worshipped him, saying very little about it, but in reality making all things, over which she had any influence, absolutely subject to him. He took all this that he had been born to without any protest—not exactly as if it were his right, but as if he was only gathering the natural fruits of fortune, which fell to the feet of every only son of wealthy parents. He was of a thoroughly gentle, amiable disposition, and he delighted in scholarship. He had always been doing right, but now, once more, he had done credit to the family by taking a first-class; and his arrival at the Groves, with the reward of learning fresh upon him, had come, and again set Portspadron re-

joicing—not that they did not all expect it—any one of them would have prophesied the thing, for what else could Mr. Herbert do?

These good people were full of rejoicing. Every day increased their interests in life and their love of their neighbours. This tired world had, no doubt, at that time, many sleepy places in it, but those who imagined that Portspadron might be reckoned in the number, because they were many miles from a market-town, and had their newspapers once a week, were very much mistaken.

When it was known that Danesford Hall lay in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bardolph property, whose heiress was now Lady Glaucott, and that Miss Clayford and her aunt had known that lady for many years, then, as on a high tide, those ladies rose to be objects of the greatest interest in the people's hearts. And that Mr. Bellingsby, who had always been as one belonging to

them, should not be banished to an unheard-of land, but, up in that far-away, beyond London country, be side by side with Sir Thomas's wife, was received as a dispensation of mercy, many voices declaring that Providence always ordered all things for the best, and that if Mr. Bellingsby was to possess this new place, and if Sir Thomas was to have a new wife, what more fitting arrangement could have been made than that their properties should lie together, and each place become an interest to that remote fishing village of which not a creature that had ever lived at Bardolph Towers or Danesford Hall had ever heard?

One and all opened their hearts to "the ladies." Mrs. Trethewry was proud of her guests; and Mr. Garret Naylor arranged a meeting at Trevarna between his aunts and Miss Clayford. Mary found that, even there, to have known Lady Glaucott from her childhood was a taking of rank in their eyes.

But when Herbert arrived there was more to tell. He had been to London, and there he had seen Charley Grandison, who was coming down with Sir Thomas and the bride, and who pronounced her to be *perfection.*

From the day of Herbert's arrival, there began that stir among the people which precedes a loyal welcome. There were no plans for triumphal arches, nor for taking the horses out of the carriage and substituting men. But there was to be a bonfire and a *feu-de-joie*, and an address, presented by the youngest child capable of such a work; and also a road lined with married men, in Sunday clothes, with their wives in their best adornments by their side. These were to be on each side the short chestnut avenue; and the children were to be in groups—every child in the village—like flower-beds before the house.

And so it all happened. The young men and maidens, with a band, long ago organized by Charley Grandison, who had a soul

for music, and was the very prince of glee-singers, walked in procession to meet Sir Thomas; and then, in a manner contrived by the military mind of General Harcourt, got themselves out of the way into the fields on each side, and re-formed when the carriage was passed, to follow after.

Mr. Bellingsby and Patty led the way; Mrs. Clayford and Mary had their places; and so the bride came, and the beloved bridegroom, who took his hat off, and stopped the carriage, while he stood up with extended arms, as if he were embracing all of them in his great good heart, and found that he had scarce any voice left, choked by the deep emotion that possessed him, to speak his thanks. Charley, who was in the carriage, took this moment to put his hand on the door and jump out like a feather for lightness. He kissed his hand to Marian, and gave Herbert a nod, but, passing both, he took his old place among the band, and their voices rose with musical

echoings among the hills, in words they all knew well—a song of what a man's wife must be—and at the end of each verse they stopped, turned round, and cheered.

In such marching order they reached the gate, where the singing stopped, and they went on their way silently through that living man-and-wife avenue of friends, who were, in that relation, both old and new. Sir Thomas, bare-headed, had a word for all, and spoke as much as circumstances allowed, to many. Lady Glaucott, as white as alabaster, gasping, as if for breath, looked more made for tears than smiles.

On they went slowly, till they reached the entrance-door of the house, where General Harcourt and his wife broke the line they had handsomely headed, and, with other friends, pressed forward to speak their welcome to one of the best of soldiers and most faithful of friends. Sir Thomas helped his wife from the carriage, stood with her on the doorstep, kissed her hand

gallantly, thanked all who were before him for one of the pleasantest sights he had ever seen, and for some of the happiest moments he had ever lived through; asked them all to come again on that day week to make acquaintance with their new friend, and then led the speechless woman into her home.

"Have we frightened you?" he asked, as they stood for a minute alone in the panneled dining-room.

"Do all those hearts love you, Sir Thomas?"

He looked with laughter at her pale face.

"Yes."

"I think it will kill me," she said; but she blushed like a carnation as she spoke.

"What, die of love? We live upon it here; and you were made to be loved—I have been telling you so for months."

"What are we to do with so much of it? I am quite overpowered—I am stupefied."

"Go and rest for a couple of hours; get

up then, dress, be your own self, and meet half-a-dozen of my friends in the evening. Can you do that?"

So Sir Thomas sent the astonished Lady Glaucott to get rid of her fatigue, and went out himself among the crowd.

As the hours went on, the people dispersed. A great feast had been prepared under cover among the farm buildings at Angersteins. The hoisting of a flag on the Ridge told that all was ready, and soon only General Harcourt's family and a few other friends were left at Rosdew. As it happens when hearts are full, there was at first but little to say. Congratulations about Herbert, astonishment over the easily-explained fact of Marian looking like a woman, compliments to Mrs. Trethewry, and pleasant nothings to pretty old Mrs. Perran, were easily got through; and then the painful embarrassed silence of full hearts came

arts from whose depths great -too great for the moment—*would*

come, putting to silence all the lesser ones.

Sir Thomas felt it distressingly. The greater part of the people were gone, only the few who knew him best were there. He said, in a loud voice,

"Grandison—Charley, come here!"

Charley, flushed with excitement, with a face radiant with admiration, and a manner full of respect, was at his step-father's side in a moment. Sir Thomas, older by many years than when he went forth in his loneliness from Rosdew, weather-beaten, scarred on the forehead and face from a terrible wound, put his hand on the young man's shoulder, and said,

"Before we go into the house from which I have been absent so long, I must say—and you are my witnesses—that I thank God for my return, and thank God that, when I suffered in body and mind, I did not fail; that, when I was wounded, I did not die; that, when I wanted one to make up for *that* loss which was *his*"—touch-

ing Charley again on the shoulder—"*his* as well as *mine*, I found her—and that I am once more *here*, in the midst of such friendship as gives youth to my age!"

The thing had been done that every heart wanted to have done, without knowing how to manage it. Every tongue was unloosed, every face full of smiles, though the women wiped their eyes, and were not ashamed of doing so.

In a few minutes they were in the house; wherever they pleased they wandered. Marian showed Mary Clayford the library, and Charley followed her—but the three were not thinking of books. They sat down and praised Sir Thomas. Presently a door opened, and the housekeeper, Mrs. Meadows, was saying,

"If we go through this room, my lady, you can get by that door to the oak dining-room, where collation is laid."

In walked Lady Glaucott, Mrs. Meadows's candle making the dimness only more visible,

and the three who had been gossiping rose up to meet her.

"Ah! who is this?" she said, with a little cry of joyful surprise. Then she put her arms round Mary Clayford, embracing her. "It is the most unexpected comfort—and I am so shy—and everybody is so good. Ah! dear Mary, how did you get here? You are laughing at me, because you were born so courageous that being suddenly made into a queen and a herione would never trouble you the least bit. I have had Mr. Grandison as my great help next to Sir Thomas; but, oh! it is sweet to see your woman's face!"

Mrs. Meadows looked virtuous, standing by with a lighted candle, as if she had long before been appointed to that solemn post, and was determined to do her duty conscientiously. In her heart she was saying,

"Well, strangers are all very well, 'specially when they're not exactly and alto-

gether strangers, having Portspadron business on their hands; but Miss Harcourt is here too—and standing by in a position quite unknown before."

But these thoughts suffered a happy interruption.

"Lady Glaucott," said Charley, "if you don't speak to Marian now I shall break my heart."

"Is that Marian?" she asked, in her soft, low voice—for she had a singularly sweet voice, and a gentle manner.

"Yes," said the girl, stepping forward. Then Lady Glaucott took the light out of Mrs. Meadows's hand, and looked at her. Charley laughed. Marian's face grew crimson.

"Forgive me," said Lady Glaucott, "I want to get you by heart. I hear you love this place, as we *do* love wood and stone sometimes."

"But there is more than wood and stone here," said Marian, bravely; then, seeing

she was expected to go on, she added, with a faltering voice, "there are memories."

Charley took the light from Lady Glaucott's hand, who had held it so as to fall steadily on the girl's face.

"You will teach me what they are, and I may learn to love them, mayn't I?"

Marian, overwrought a little—perhaps surprised at Lady Glaucott's manner, and not altogether unconscious of having given up her kingdom into the hands of the true queen—burst into sudden tears. It was over in a moment, like an April shower; and, like sunshine bursting through a cloud, her face was full of smiles in an instant. Then Lady Glaucott stooped her fair face and kissed Marian with a tenderness that was never forgotten.

Mary Clayford looked round triumphantly, as one who would say, "You will soon find out how good she is." Mrs. Meadows repented of her meditation, and called it rash judgment; and Charley, giving Lady

Glaucott his arm, asked Mrs. Meadows to walk before them with the light, and carried her off to Sir Thomas like a conqueror.

So the day came to an end. The broad-faced moon threw her light down on the sea, and turned the rippling waves into a silver field; the Portspadron householders shut their shutters, to keep out the rays which were bad for both body and brains, they said, and went to sleep, blessing Sir Thomas.

In the great stillness Charley Grandison vowed silent vows of devotion to his incomparable Marian; and the young girl herself slept calmly in the happy security of his being, of all the world, the dearest and best. Mrs. Harcourt believed in her husband, and thanked Heaven for her handsome family, her heart, as ever on such occasions, demanding a parenthesis of—"especially Herbert." Mrs. Angerstein and Patty sat up late talking of the dead in the

study, which was full of moonlight, and then crept away with a luxurious sadness to their rooms to sleep. Dr. Perran had been called away to a serious case ten miles off, and had driven there with his assistant; and his mother was sound asleep in an easy-chair, having sent her servants, who were tired out with enjoyment, to bed, and having undertaken to wait up herself for their return.

Mr. Bellingsby and Herbert were out on the sea, enjoying the sight and fun of the pilchard taking. But the too bright night made the fish lively, and the men were excited over the danger of breaking the nets, and the desire to secure the riches which lay shining before them. The fish-women were up, ready to help the men, and others waiting to make their bargains. This night was alive with work, and the silence filled with excitement; and still the great moon was sailing away above all in a cloudless sky.

"My dear Mary," said Mrs. Clayford, "it is the most extraordinary state of things. I hope they won't be coming in and smoking; and Mr. Trethewry knows I object to that person over my head who puts on his boots the first thing, and has no slippers. And I can't think how the jugs and basins bear it. But she is very obliging. However, it would be too much if it happened every day. Like seeing that play—it was called, I think, the Fatal Marriage, which I can never forget."

"Oh! it won't happen every day," says Mary. And Mrs. Clayford says, "That is quite right, my dear, there should be always moderation," and so drops asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

FORGET ME NOT.

If e'er the soul in hope and love were faint,
Then, like an antidote to mortal taint,
I'd give the pretty flower forget-me-not.

COLERIDGE.

IT became quite a matter of distress to Mrs. Clayford and her niece that they must leave Portspadron. Mary's lover would not be trifled with; he wished to get what he called "the Danesford business" off his hands, and he wanted Mary to fix on some smaller house, to which she could move all that belonged to her, and where she could establish her aunt.

"It will leave you at liberty," wrote Mr.

Garret Naylor; and he added some most judicious moralizing on the advantages of freedom, and the blessing of being able to do whatever we like.

It was all most undeniable advice, and Mary proceeded to obey it, Mrs. Clayford observing, in the intervals of packing and paying farewell visits, that nothing ever lasted for ever, and that it would be a great pity if anything did, for few things were more desirable than change; and Mr. Bellingsby, being all that they could wish for, and Miss Angerstein quite fit for her new position in life, why, there was nothing more to say. She almost shed tears, dear, gentle lady, when she bade General Harcourt good-bye, fearing that, at his age, they might never meet again—an unwelcome truism, the utterance of which gave no pain, for it was presented to her hearers in so many words that not one of them understood it. She told Herbert never to be near them without making the fact

known, as she should have the greatest pleasure in renewing their acquaintance; and she prophesied such a future for him, even to his face, that he could hardly listen without a blush.

With Sir Thomas she got on not quite so easily. He was very patient with her, but he had not the older man's easy gaiety of heart, which required no more than that other hearts should be pleased to be pleased itself. Sir Thomas was troubled by a desire to understand accurately what Mrs. Clayford wished to say, and then to give her exact and intelligent answers. Not succeeding in what he felt to be the duty of a man to a woman, he grew puzzled, and fell into a state of gentle despair. It was in vain that Lady Glaucott said,

"Oh! pray give it up! No one ever understood my friend's aunt, but she is the best creature in the world, and neither desires instruction nor requires sympathy. Never mind the aunt; turn your attentions

to the niece, Sir Thomas. I am very fond of Mary."

It was in vain that his wife tried to explain matters by assuring him that Mrs. Clayford was not to be understood in any way that he could ever consider satisfactory—all in vain; the civil Sir Thomas tried again, listened again, was again mystified, and lost in a maze of words, and he finally took off his hat in a polite farewell, believing that Mrs. Clayford had tried to persuade him that the changes of the moon were "beyond anything, and quite different at Portspadron from anywhere else, with splendid scenery, and small dark boats in the very centre of all."

"You have so little imagination," said Lady Glaucott. "I understood her perfectly, and you took me out to see it yourself only last night."

But with Mary Clayford Sir Thomas was really sorry to part. He was her debtor for having made his wife's entrance on her

new home less formidable and lonely than it might have been. Those two had talked over the whole Danesford story, and Sir Thomas had asked Alfred Bellingsby and his mother and Patty to come and talk it also through with him. They all three talked with the decision and accuracy he so much valued, and left him amazed that the prospect of so great a change should so little affect them.

"I have never believed in money," Mrs. Angerstein said, "nor have those young people been brought up in a different creed. We are thankful for enough, and we like work. If he is really the heir to Danesford Hall, he must take the place that Providence has appointed to him; and there is no fear about Patty. I have never seen her equal; all craving vanity and proud desires are impossible to her, I believe. She has a merry heart and a pure soul."

So they all talked, and Mary Clayford had certainly done more to make the shy

Lady Glaucott at home in all Portspadron interests in a week than Sir Thomas, with friends to help him, could have done in six months. But now "the ladies" were to go, and when the time came they departed, with all honour and praise.

But a worse parting was at hand—a parting that brought tears to Lady Glaucott's eyes, and shook the heart of the brave Sir Thomas; but he bore up, like the hero that he had shown himself to be, and congratulated Charley on his being ordered to India, even though it was almost beyond all human hope that he should live to see him again. Charley felt the force of that fact painfully. But youth is full of hope. There had undoubtedly been centenarians in this dying world, and Sir Thomas might live longer than other people. It would have been the happiest conceivable event, if it had happened so as to have sent him to our Eastern Empire while his step-father was there engaged in honourable service; but

times and seasons seldom fit in with the desires and wills of men. The strongest and best are the slaves of circumstance; and so, just as Sir Thomas Glaucott got home, turning his sword into a pruning-hook, and looking back on life as on a labour ended, his step-son went forth into life's active warfare, and went forth alone.

The youth felt the wrench keenly, and yet was glad to go. He had to conquer the world that lay before him, and reach to the life that lay beyond; the world at his feet had for him rank, and fame, and money —in the life beyond there was rest, home, and Marian. He would have given years, many years, at the end of life, if he were to count the promised three-score years and ten, to have secured Marian there and then, and taken her out with him. He desired it with the fresh, unreasonable, boyish eagerness that can ill endure either denial or delay. He would stand still in the midst of his preparations to ask how he could do

it—to declare that it must be done; but not all the life, strength, hope, or self-sacrifice of three-and-twenty could, all put together, open a way for him to possess his treasure. He had to go away and leave her, face a new world without her, conquer all things for her, and then——? It was a terrible question. He would do better; he would fling himself at her feet, and tell out his whole heart, and yet ask nothing; he would be more reasonable than that—he would explain everything, and engage himself to her solemnly, and yet be so generous as to ask for no promise in return; he would do the truer thing—ask for her love, and and go away with her promise in his heart, pledged to each other before all the world.

But there was another side to this pleasant picture—the General would refuse his consent. He knew that he was not in circumstances to ask for Marian as his wife; if he risked too much, he should lose all,

and caution whispered that the best thing of all was to do nothing.

Not the least knowing what might happen, Charley Grandison went to the Groves to bid good-bye. He heard all those things said that every young soldier has heard, and he heard with the usual want of understanding. He was taking last looks at the pictures on the panelled walls, at the bindings of the books, and the pattern of the carpet.

He gazed at the General's reading-stand, with the book wide open, and the four-sided ruler to keep the leaves in proper position, and he thought he should know it again at any distance of time or place—he was saying to it, "Good-bye, old mahogany —a happy meeting to us both some bright future day."

But the General was telling his experience, no doubt, with a practical view and a moral to it, and Charley heard big words, which seemed to have no meaning in them.

"Your excellency," and "the commander-

in-chief," and "the finest soldier in the world, sir, and the best general this country ever knew."

The words which seemed to be the biggest, on buzzing wings, were whizzing round, and Charley was sensible of a sad question in his heart. "Dear old man, will he be dead, I wonder, when I come back again?" Then he thought he would make a bold stroke, and tell him about Marian; and he was considering how to do this, while, "The hottest charge I ever beheld—the men mad with the excitement of the moment," was in his ears, mingled with the sounds of steps in the passage and a door opening, when Mrs. Harcourt came up to them, and said, in her straightforward, gentle way,

"We are keeping him from Sir Thomas. His claims are to be thought of now."

"I had forgotten," said General Harcourt, rising up. "You have been so much about us, sir. I had forgotten for the moment that there was any other old general in the

place besides myself." He held out his hand—his left hand. He said smiling, "The best I have—the nearest my heart. May a good Providence watch over you! May you never be unworthy of His care! Don't forget us, Charley, my dear boy, my dear, good lad."

And so he dropt into his chair, and Charley, bending low, took his hand and thanked him. Then he turned to Mrs. Harcourt, and laid his head on her shoulder, while she treated him as if he had been her son, and whispered, "Go—go now, my dear."

So he left them, and pursued a fleetly flying footstep down the passage to a morning-room, from which, by a flight of stone steps, you could get out into the garden. To this room he and Marian got together.

"They are waiting for you," said the girl, with a pale face—"they are outside; they sent mamma for you. We *could* not say good-bye before everybody. Oh! Charley,

I ought to be glad. I am somehow and somewhere, but I can't get at it now."

She was smiling, with a voice trembling pathetically, and he never spoke, but looked at her.

"We have seen so little of you lately, and I know that if one can't see you, it is no matter where you are. But it is come now. Why do you look so, Charley? Oh! what is the use of having people to love if they are to be sent away for ever and ever like this? You may be very glad you've no sisters. It would kill me if Herbert were to go. It's like burying people before they are dead."

"Marian, I am not your brother!"—he took her by the arm—"Marian!" she bent down like one shrinking away under the earnestness of his voice and manner; but he held her firmly—there was Herbert's voice calling him—"Marian, trust me!"

She turned her head, looking up at him with a puzzled face, as if she wanted to know more.

"Good-bye; and, Marian, trust me."

He kissed her—as he well might, for as children together they had kissed each other every night—and he opened the glass door and ran down the steps. Marian was on her knees on the floor, her arms resting on a table, her face hidden on her hands. She was quietly shedding sorrowful, prayerful tears. The voices from below came up to her. Lady Glaucott had given him a revolver of the greatest possible excellence. Herbert was talking of it.

"Yes," said Charley, "a six-barrel revolver is a good sort of thing. It saves a deal of talking."

Marian lifted her head and smiled. Then they spoke again—they were talking of his journey.

"Now, Charley, here's your horse. Black Di looks well. Good-bye, old fellow. Mind you write. There will be time for half a dozen letters before you go. We shall look [redacted] for you going down the Channel.

Alfred says he shall be out in the *Martha*—there!"

She heard the horse's hoofs on the gravel. The voices grew lower, grave in tone, tenderer; the tread of Black Di got fainter and fainter; footsteps died away; there was no one left. In the silence the girl kneeled and prayed. Then she rose up and went out to the companionship of the sea, and the voice of the lazy waves as they flowed up slowly, and went back with unwilling sighs upon the sands. This great sea would be between them soon, dividing Charley from them for many years. Yet the great sea would soon be the way to Charley. Across it would pass and repass words of love, praise, and encouragement. Oh, friendly sea! Already, as she looked across its glittering plain, she felt that she was gazing towards Charley—towards where Charley would be in so short a time.

When Sir Thomas and Lady Glaucott

came that evening to the Groves, they could hardly mention the young man's name. Lady Glaucott openly wiped her eyes, and said he had already been so great a pleasure to her—he was so delightful a character, and she was so destitute of encouraging friends, she could ill afford to part with his goodness, his life, and his love. Marian vowed a vow of constancy to that lady immediately, in her secret heart. Charley had called her "perfection," and she had understood him. "I shall be as fond as ever of going to Rosdew," thought Marian. "We can talk of Charley." Before night she was glad in this way to have found a friend, and she began to feel comforted.

Herbert watched Marian—he contemplated her as a new study, and a very interesting one. He beguiled his time with wonderings about her. But he never spoke of Charley. He had not any right to speak of him. Charley had told him just before he went away, for the twentieth time, that

he should never love anyone but Marian. He had said that it was an odious thing to have to leave her when his arms were strong enough to work in the fields, build up his house, and get his "missis" by his side at home. Oh! they talked a great deal about free men, but there was no freedom, and there never could have been intended to be any. Was *he* free?—Was *she?* He believed firmly that if they were both servants, they could be married as soon as they pleased.

"We are all servants—that is it," said Charley; "but I am worst off, for I have to work to be my own master. And I have no right to speak to her, no right to bind her, no right to say a word beyond what our friendship allows."

And so he had contented himself with the vague "*Trust me*, Marian, *trust me.*" They were good words, however, and they echoed in her ears, and printed themselves upon her heart, and she gave to them her

own interpretation. And still Herbert, who knew so much, said nothing; but he watched and wondered over her. He said to himself that Charley had been very wise to confide in him only—*very* wise. He had asked him to advise him well if a moment for advice should ever come.

"And of course I shall," mused Herbert. "We are all so fond of him, that if he got on it would be a very agreeable thing. And Sir Thomas may make a real son of him by his will. I should not be at all surprised if Charley had Rosdew, and then nothing could be nicer than to have Marian there. But in the meantime so many things may happen. They will take her to London, and she will be presented in the Spring."

And full of such good, common-sense thoughts, Herbert wandered away among the green slopes and gravelled paths of the Groves, and contemplated his own future, which was a subject of untiring interest.

They had begun to look forward to see the good ship in which Charley sailed as she went down channel.

"Order the carriage. Marian, we will drive to Hecklas. We will see all we can of the ship in which our hero sails. Alfred is gone—sailed to Plymouth yesterday; did you hear that? Well, those three boys have been friends from childhood, and they are worthy of each other."

So the cream-coloured ponies, and the carriage they always drew, were got ready for the General. But a mist rose. A thick mist rolling in from the sea and clothing every object inland, great and small, with a cloud which no eye could penetrate. You could not see the Ridge, nor Mrs. Angerstein's, nor rock, nor tree, nor anything in all the earth that was more than ten yards off.

No one left the house. The General, dispirited, sat silent in his great chair. Mrs. Harcourt was weighed down by the dis-

covery of all the misery that years of absence often meant; of the possibility of war, of the dangers of climate, of the approach, in some form or other, of death to all. She went about the house with a dreadful woe-struck aspect, sobbing at intervals with her face hidden in her handkerchief.

Herbert went to his room, drew down his blinds, lighted candles, and took to deep study, with his door locked.

Marian opened a great cupboard, full of all manner of stored-up treasures—old china, old jewelry, trinkets in Indian gold, silks, muslins, pieces of tapestry, and wove work, glittering with gold thread and pearls. They had always to be looked through once or twice every year, and measures taken against dust and moths. So she put on a great holland apron, and, with a delighted maid-servant, all eyes and wonderment, she did the work.

The hour for luncheon came at last.

"Your father won't come to luncheon.

He has ordered a basin of soup to be taken to his room. Don't be frightened. He is not ill. But of course we feel it." Mrs. Harcourt sighed. "What will you eat, Marian? He was like another son."

"Oh! stop, pray. You will make me jealous," says Herbert. "How I wish it was to-morrow! Mother, mightn't we have a bottle of champagne? I feel it in my throat. Marian, too, is hoarse with the dust from that gorgeous old rubbish—and soup is very bad for my father. Marian can take him some cold pheasant, and all of us, in his room, will have 'a health to the outward-bound!'"

"It is not two o'clock yet," said Mrs. Harcourt, vaguely. "Do as you please, Herbert."

"You are not up to the occasion at all, mother," said Herbert, ringing the bell, and then waiting for it to be answered. "Now, David," to the servant, "we are going to have champagne in the General's room, and

get up a bottle of port and another of sherry, and drink Mr. Grandison's health in the kitchen to-night. He is to be a hero, you know; and, 'here's a health to the outward-bound!'"

It was the wisest thing in the world to do. It was the worldly way of making positive good out of present evil. No one complained of any bad effects the next morning, and news came in by a benighted lugger that the Queen's ship had made her way down channel, as had been expected, and so they knew that Charley was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

TO-MORROW.

My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it.
SHAKESPEARE.

MARIAN rose with Herbert's words, so carelessly spoken, ringing with an echoing memory in her ears—"I wish it was to-morrow!"

The day had come, and no more lovely morning had ever, at that season of the year, more graciously blessed the earth. The sun shone as if it were Spring, the loud song of the redbreast outside Marian's window thanked her for the breakfast she had spread for him over-night, and the scent of Winter violets made the air fragrant.

Before mid-day the whole village was alive with excitement. The bay was full of fish. The women had not finished the packing in the fish-cellars of the last great catch that had come in. There was plenty of work for the day, and even the following night would be full of labour.

Sir Thomas was glad to show Lady Glaucott the sight of the women hard at work in the fish-cellars. They had called at the Groves on their way down, and got Marian to join them. Everyone was full of gladness. Personal feelings were lost in the overwhelming sentiment of the general good that this late harvest of the great deep was providing.

"Yes, your honour," said an old man, "'tis late, so near the end of November—late in a general way. But the finest catch I ever mind was when I was but a boy, on the night of Christmas Eve. And proud and happy we were not to have put the nets away for good and all, as the Portray people

had done two months before. Her lady-ship—excusing my freedom—should see our seine brought up the cliff. 'Tis a sight to frighten the Londoners. Backwards and forwards across the horses' backs, my lady, and the horses two and two. Talk of women's tidiness! There's no particularity like that of the man who can manage such a thing as that; spread, wind, fold it up, and put it away." And the man laughed, as Sir Thomas did, at his honest self-praise.

Marian and Lady Glaucott were in the "cellars," or rather sheds, for they were square buildings, with "helling-stone roofs;" and, with shortened garments, they stood in the midst, and saw the women packing the fish in layers from the floor upwards, layer after layer, with the heads outside, making a wall of some feet thick against the white-washed side of the building. They packed very fast, with coarse salt between every row of fish; and when the packing had been brought to a certain level, huge weights

were placed to press out the oil, which leaked away, by channels made to receive it, into vessels sunk into the floor.

It was all roughly contrived, and of easy management. The women were wrapped round in dark-coloured woollen aprons. They rubbed the salt from their arms, by way of a slight attempt at making a respectful appearance before her ladyship, and, with familiar smiles and merry words, welcomed her first appearance among them.

"You bring us plenty, my lady. There has scarce been such luck for years and years. Take care of your gownd against the oil—a fine profit lies there, though. And if your ladyship would like some fish salted down for Rosdew, we should do it in a barrel just like this, only packing the fish round and round, and putting fine salt, and less of it, and no oil pressed out. It will all be cleared out from here, and sent to foreign parts, my lady. No, we don't eat

this much; we do it for ourselves as we should do it for you."

And so they chatted on, and answered her questions, and explained matters for her instruction, being rather particular in these instructions, because no one could expect a foreigner like her to be knowledgeable as to the things she had come among. They tell her there is no better thing than a pilchard to season the stomach—and add to the puzzle by saying that there is no dirtier thing in life than to eat it with a knife and fork.

But Lady Glaucott is delighted, though mystified. She shows herself to be a modest learner in these new ways, and they all admire her.

"Where is Miss Harcourt?" she inquires, when her lesson seems to be over.

"Gone out there with Hester Sanson, poor blinded slut! She can't see her way before her, nor never could; and 'tisn't only crabs that are born to walk out of the

straight. He who made her knows most about her, I expect. But she made a good thing of her fish—the men are never hard on Hester—and she ought to have money in her pocket by now."

So Lady Glaucott with pleasant words. picks her way out of the fish-cellar, on to the cleanly sands, and looks about for Marian. She hears a voice calling to her; she looks up, and, a little way above her, on the cliff-side, she sees her, and Hester is toiling up the path, with the fish-basket at her back, resting on a pad which is tied round her waist, and kept steady by the wide band which presses tight across her forehead.

"I am coming down," says Marian.

"Oh! I see the path. I will come up."

So the two meet on a green standing-place, and after taking breath for a few seconds, they get higher up on the steep, sloping cliff, and walk out by the edge of a huge overhanging crag, to a wide space of

short herbage, where sheep are grazing, and where some scattered masses of dark rock, which at some distant time have broken away and dropped from the cliff above, afford them seats to rest upon.

"It is a grand outline," Lady Glaucott says. "Those craggy points jutting out into the sea, and those sandy beaches between. How green the water lies close to the land, and how dark it is in the bay! It is such a contrast to the wild wood and fell scenery round the Towers. How strong your feelings of possession seem to be! The people are your own—— What is the matter?"

Men and youths were bounding down the cliff, jumping from place to place, where there was no path, with loud, encouraging voices, in such a light-hearted hurry that they were close to them before they knew where they were.

"Ask your pardon, ladies," and they had dropped off the edge of the crag, and were all gone except one elderly man, who stopped to speak to Marian.

"You are not ready to go out again?" she said.

"No, miss. But 'tis a cruel pity—the bay's full of fish! Portray people are right with their seine, but short of men. We are all comrades for the moment. But I am only an on-looker. I'm wanted home," said the man, laughing. "The young ones will do for Portray. And there's Miss Angerstein out there at the point of the ridge with her sketch-book. She will draw the whole scene, and the boats like life, before she has done. She drew one we built here at Portspadron, and the men in her, and though she was too far off to see a feature, my old mother could name every one of them. So she cut the leaf out of her book and giv'd it to her, and 'tis framed and glazed. I can't think how she does it; 'tis most miraculous," says the man.

"I heard," said Marian, in a steady voice, "that the ship that took the troops to India was off Portspadron yesterday."

"I seed her myself," said the man. "The mist just cleared off in a way, and showed her to us. 'Twas a solemn sight. She was going slow and steadily. We giv'd her a cheer, knowing who was aboard—God bless him!"

Marian held her breath, and clasped her hands tightly together, and stayed as immoveable as the rock by her side.

"There is Sir Thomas," said Lady Glaucott. But Marian never spoke.

He was down below by the pier, making friendly salutations with hat and hand to some one who was standing up bowing, and waving a handkerchief in a lugger standing out at a safe distance, but near enough for the recognition of friends.

"Who is it?" asked Lady Glaucott.

Marian did not know. Their new companion had left them, letting himself down over the edge of the crag as the younger man had done, but with rather more evident attention to the safety of life and limb.

"I wish we could get across to Patty," said Marian. "It looks so near, and yet it is far off; there is the road from the pier to the village, the brook, and the black rocks between us, making her at an impossible distance. How still, and earnest, and pretty she looks, like a picture with a dark background, sitting in the turn of the path, unconscious of everything but the scene she is making her own, gathering all into her treasure-book. Oh! look at that man running on the Ridge—oh! oh!"

He had got to the point, and was bounding down the narrow pathway to the place where Patty was sitting. Lady Glaucott and Marian got up and ran back from the precipitous point, doing themselves, by an overpowering impulse, what they desired Patty to do. They cried aloud. They saw the man—it was Dick Sanson—make his last spring, as, scorning the zig-zag path, he took a direct course to the beach below; he jumped to the place where she sat, swerved

in his leap as he saw her, gave a great cry, which was echoed back from rock to rock with a reverberation which fell like mockery upon their ears, and when they looked again, there was no one there!

Where they fell, the dark cliff rose straight from the sea. The pathway that had been cut there led down the side of the cliff, but they had fallen from the upstanding, time-worn rock, against which the waves rose and fell for ever. The lowest tides never saw the Black-rock point stand dry and bare; the everlasting wash of the ceaseless waves had worn the dark stone till the veins showed red and green, like polished marble—a long-prepared monument now for the dead below.

Dick Sanson's cry had been heard far and wide, and many had seen what we have told. Portray and Portspadron—comrades all to-day, as the old seaman had said—were together in an unthought-of work. Sir Thomas forgot his wife, and Marian

gave no thought to her friends at home. How time passed they did not know—what people were doing they could not understand. But the Black Rock was alive with human beings, and the fishing-boats were on the sea in a search after the dead. Eager voices, suppressed shouts, a dreadful sound of congratulation, and of a hideous sort of sorrowful satisfaction, made the women flock together with sobbing and tears; and then a slowly-rowed boat came to the pier, and on a plank, wrapped up, and covered over, was——

"My dears," said Sir Thomas—"my dears, if the water had been deeper—if the tide had been at the full. But there are rocks all round there, and she is dead—killed by a blow on the head. She can be carried up to her own house. They are excellent fellows; we can follow. This way—not by the cliff-path—by the road. The Lord have mercy on her and on us!—have mercy upon us!—have mercy!"

And so they followed after, the last in a sad procession; and when they got to the gate going into the Groves, Sir Thomas told his wife to go there with Marian.

"No one knows Mrs. Angerstein as well as I do," he said. "I am her natural friend in this calamitous moment. Go in, and I will fetch you, Mary."

So they went to the Groves, and let others tell the story, while they sat down and wept bitterly—wept in each other's arms—wept and wondered.

Herbert, who had not been at home when they got to the Groves, came at last, walking into the room with the pale face so seldom seen on the shoulders of a man, and which, there, always tells of a grief which is more another's than his own. No one asked him any questions. The sight of his rigid countenance was enough. They waited meekly to be spoken to.

"I am desired to take you home, Lady Glaucott," he said. "Sir Thomas has sent

me—I have got out the carriage," he went on, turning to his father. "I have got to go on to Trevarna. Sir Thomas is staying for a few hours with Mrs. Angerstein."

"Where is Alfred?" asked Marian.

"Out in the *Martha*. They expect him back this afternoon."

Herbert leaned his arm on the mantel-shelf, and turned his head away. Mrs. Harcourt sobbed audibly. The sound of wheels as the carriage approached the house made Lady Glaucott get up. She gave her hand with her quiet grace, silently, for she could not have trusted her voice to speak. The General, who remained in his chair, only looked at her with his sad eyes tenderly, as if she had been his daughter, and she walked away, with Mrs. Harcourt by her side. No one seemed to know how the hours went, but before darkness came Marian had gone with Mrs. Perran to Angersteins. She had walked back through the star-lit night with Dr. Perran, and Alfred had come home.

Before a week had passed, through a way lined with people, the pride of the village was taken to the last lowly home in the pulseless breast of Mother Earth. They bore her slowly on, down the orchard path, and through the pastures and corn-fields, lying in furrows, and beyond the Ridge, to the hamlet, where the church-tower of Hecklas was half-hidden among the bare branches of oak and ash. They laid her down before the ancient stone cross in the wall by the churchyard gate, and bared their heads to the rude carving, of which the age could only be guessed at by the learned, but which was asserted by those people in simple words. "Give her a taste of the old religion," they said; and so they stood in the public road by the coffin and the crucifix, and sang a mournful hymn. There, where the dangers of the coast were greatest, and the waves rose and fell, and mingled with the human voices on the height above, they poured forth a strange strain,

like a wild lullaby. Far away the voices reached, as old men and young—a vast multitude—took up the *refrain* of the verses which the women and girls had sung.

The friends of the dead stood silently, letting the love of the strong-hearted people express itself as it would. There they stood—Mrs. Angerstein between her son and Sir Thomas; Marian with Mrs. Perran and her brother. Mrs. Angerstein had walked all the way—first of the mourners, and by herself, as her duty was, for she stood in the place of the maiden's mother, both by her own marriage with her father, and by her son's betrothal to her. Herbert had been by the side of his friend Alfred; and Jerry and Joan had come next.

The carriages from Rosdew and the Groves had gone by another way, and been kept completely out of sight. Only human hearts and human hands were welcome at such times, and on such occasions. Not a man nor woman in all that country side, or

far-reaching sea-shore, had at that date ever seen a hearse. But Mrs. Angerstein, after the funeral, was taken possession of by Sir Thomas and Mrs. Perran, and driven rapidly home. When Alfred returned, she was on the door-step to receive him.

Many times that day the mother and son talked together, and debated questions, as far as anything was ever debated with Mr. Bellingsby. Even into the night they talked. The next morning, by daybreak, the man was gone. The son had left his mother, because he was of that sort who must bear his burden by himself, taking that without human aid which was beyond human sympathy. She had become convinced that it was best.

"Mr. Bellingsby is gone," she said, gravely to her servants. "We shall hear from him soon, and often. He is gone!" That was all.

And Joan and Jerry talked together, and said that it was all along of bringing

back life to Dick Sanson; a drowned man never being of any good. Death is always after him and his.

"He'll never come to any good, and maister is paid out for the thing he did—but no one ever thought it would fall on him through Miss Angerstein."

"Never come to any good," says Joan, contemptuously. "Doesn't thy silly brain understand that he's gone too? She died where she dropped; but he is lying too deep for burial—and sarve him right too!"

"Yes, if he was born to be drowned," Jerry answers, for he never gives up his opinion, "but there's no knowing anything about it. When I see the proof in his body then I'll believe."

There was every exertion made to recover the body of Dick Sanson, but no success attended the people's efforts. The pilchard seines were put up, and the men, out by day and night trawling, had often horrible fears as to what their work might bring to light.

But nothing was seen of Dick Sanson, or heard of him, dead or alive.

Christmas came, and the usual gifts were given, this year by Lady Glaucott's own hands, to the people of Portspadron. Then there arose a question of where was Hester? She was gone. She was reported to have been half starved, but kept alive by Marian, who had, through an illness which had kept Hester to her bed, every day carried her food and medicine. Other comforts, such as coal and wood, had been sent by Mrs. Perran, and the General had paid her house-rent.

On Christmas morning, when Mrs. Angerstein had risen early to go with a gift to the woman's cottage, she was gone.

"People had taken against her," she had been heard to say. However that might be, Hester was gone. She had departed without secresy, but in a silent way, which had roused no suspicion, and given ground for no remarks.

She had sold her fish-basket, and some earthenware which she had been known to value highly; and a broker from Trevarna, after her departure, had come in a cart for her bed, bedding, old oak table, and clock. He knew more about her than anyone else, it seemed. She had told him that a friend had sent for her, and that she expected to be maintained in a great measure at that person's expense, during the few years of life that might be left in this now, to her, sad and desolate world.

"It was all seen in the newspapers," she had said; "upon which I was written to."

And as the postman had actually delivered a letter at her house, no more was thought of her. She had said good-bye to no one. Her idea—in some degree true—that people had taken against her, accounted for that.

CHAPTER X.

AGED SEVENTY-SEVEN.

This no to-morrow hath, nor yesterday;
Running, it never runs from us away,
But truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day.

DONNE.

LADY GLAUCOTT, dividing her favours, had given her Christmas to Rosdew, and her New Year's Day to the Towers. She and Sir Thomas had gone away for a month.

At the Groves the sense of being left alone came as a relief. When Mrs. Trethewry bowed her head, and clasped her hands upon her breast, and repeated again and again the brief sentence, "There is nothing to say," she had, in fact, said everything. A great storm had passed by, and

left rent hearts behind it. The torpor of Winter would rest and recover them—the Spring would return. When the primroses on Patty's grave should blossom, lifting their starry faces to heaven, there would be work in the world once more. People can't think of everything at the same time. She would never be forgotten, but those who just now seemed paralyzed with the pain of their loss would rise up and work; for there is a time to mourn, and a time to be comforted.

This time of stillness was a great relief to Marian, on whom this woe had fallen with the peculiar terror of a first experience. Day after day she lived through the accustomed round of work with General Harcourt. Herbert was with them, and she rode and walked with him and her father. She listened when he talked, and greatly enjoyed his company when there were others by; but, for some reason which she could not have explained to herself, she

shunned being alone with him. He might have talked of one of those who had so lately been lost to them, though in such different ways. The loss of Alfred was the least felt, for he had gone of his own will, and in going had removed his sorrow from their sight; but Marian could not bear to speak in any way of the things that had happened. It was her way to suffer alone.

There are those who never overcome, if they are what people call *helped*. If they do not slay their troubles single-handed, they can never make sure that they are dead. But Time works fast, and he works well. Healthy natures heal their heart-wounds quickly; and so it was happening at the Groves when Mrs. Harcourt one day, with a disturbed face, met Marian in the passage that led to the General's room, and said, in a hard voice,

"Go to your father—Marian, for the first time in my life, I have reproached him."

Then she passed quickly on, and Marian

saw a spasm of distress pass across her mother's face. In her whole life she had never seen such marks of emotion there. She was bewildered with surprise.

When she reached her father's room, he was sitting, as usual, with his book-desk on his right side, and a heavy table brought close to his left hand. She almost expected to see him angry; but it was a house where the ways and manners of perfectly civilized life were never departed from. He spoke with more even than his usual gentleness.

"Dear child," he said, "do you see that long paper there? Sit down. I am going to indite my will."

Marian's eyes, wide open and questioning, were on him.

"Sit down," he said, and she obeyed him without a word. He spoke steadily, as fast as she could write, never keeping him waiting. He made Herbert his sole executor; he left him one thousand pounds, naming the security in which it was placed.

He ordered everything to be sold by him, and after his debts were paid, the remainder was to be invested in Herbert's and his mother's names, for the use, during his widow's life, of herself and her daughters; and on Mrs. Harcourt's death it was to be equally divided among the surviving children.

Marian did her work. Once she looked in her father's face with an earnest desire to plead with him for a change as to the Groves; but he read her countenance, and said,

"Don't speak, child. You do not understand. Your mother has sent for Dr. and Mrs. Perran and Amy Trethewry. See if they are come. They will witness my signature."

The General was accustomed to be obeyed; and Marian did his bidding now, as she always did, without any hesitation. She found their friends had come, and Dr. Per-

ran went first, at Mrs. Harcourt's request, to speak to her husband.

"You had better come with me, Marian," said her mother. "We will both of us be there."

So Marian saw her father sign his will, having added the formal words above the signature with his own left hand, and she saw the witnesses put their names in the right place. General Harcourt thanked them in his courteous way, and they left him alone.

"It has been a little too much for him," said Dr. Perran. "Get him early to bed. Put away the will, and don't let him talk about it. I should have expected him to have settled all that sort of thing long ago."

"New circumstances have made a new will desirable," said Mrs. Harcourt.

Herbert looked at his mother; but she said nothing more. When they were alone in the evening, Herbert said,

"May I know about the new circum-

stances, mother? My father had confided in me before. I wonder why I am not in his confidence *now*."

Mrs. Harcourt, by a little shake of the head, dismissed the subject. Herbert felt hurt in his dignity, and in an injured tone said, "Good night."

"We shall see you at tea, I suppose?" said his mother, with an air of surprise.

"I think not—I am busy. I shall order some coffee upstairs. I am likely to be late."

She let him go without any more words.

"Go and sit with your father, Marian," she said; and Marian left her alone.

It seemed to Marian, when she went into the library, where her father was, that he looked hot and tired.

"You have been writing. You should never write at night. It always makes your arm ache," she said gently, kissing him on the forehead.

"I have been writing to you, my dear

right hand," he said, in his pleasantest manner. Then she saw that he had tears in his eyes.

"Let me read it?" she said, smiling.

"No. But you will read it soon enough. I am going to seal it up."

She watched him, with a weight to steady the paper, seal the letter in his clever way, for he was very quick at contrivances which, in his own room, made him almost independent of help. He put the letter with the will, and locked both away in the drawer of an ebony cabinet. Then she took her work, and they began to talk together.

"I have trusted you," he said.

She looked up, her face in a glow. It brought back the thought of Charley Grandison, who had said, "Trust me, Marian." Was there so much trust given and received in this world, then, that she had had to *trust,* and now was *trusted,* within the short space of only a few weeks?"

"Can you be faithful, child?"

"To whom?" she asked.

"To your mother, to Herbert, to your young sister Lizzie, to *me*—my memory, I should say, for my work will be done when yours begins."

"Yes," said Marian, "I could be faithful to those you have named."

"Even to your own loss?"

"Yes, if *you* desired it."

"I do," he said, with a groan.

She started up.

"You are ill! Father! father!" She rang the bell, she loosened the things about his neck. "Dr. Perran!—quick!—my mother!—go!—he is ill!" she cried to the servant at the door.

Dr. Perran came. The whole household was in alarm. Only Mrs. Harcourt seemed to preserve her senses in a cold tranquillity, which was worse to see than the loudest grief. She never asked if he would recover.

It occurred to Marian that she scarcely seemed to wish it.

But General Harcourt recovered rapidly. In a week he was being driven about in the carriage; and Mrs. Harcourt, with an exceeding watchfulness, which he seemed to prize greatly, and almost to the total forgetfulness of Marian, never left his side. He would sit for hours with her hand in his.

One afternoon, when she had left him to Marian's care, he said,

"Your mother is always right. I beg her pardon for all the grief I have ever caused her. I die, knowing that her forgiveness is perfect, and that she will love me always. Therefore, Marian, mind my last words—Be faithful. I have trusted you —I trust you, Marian!"

She thought his mind wandered. She led him off gently to talk of other things. And when her mother came back she left them together. That night General Harcourt died. An hour or two after her

mother had put the sealed letter into her hands.

"He trusted you, my dear," said Mrs. Harcourt, "and he was right. Women know more about *trust* than men. Men reason too much. And the less you reason when you are *trusted* the better."

Marian thought it strange that her mother should, so soon upon their great grief, say all this. But she took the letter.

"Am I to read it now?"

With a very calm "Yes," Mrs. Harcourt answered her. Then Marian read a short history of how, years ago, in India, her father had rescued from a dissipated course his wife's only relative—a brother many years younger than herself; and how this brother had been left as a sort of legacy to her by her father; of how she had loved him, and how he had been scarcely more than a boy when General Harcourt had rescued him from shame and penury. It went on to say how he had been educated;

how he had pursued his calling, and obtained success; how General Harcourt had employed him, proved him, recommended him; and how, as an army agent, he had become known and trusted. In his old age General Harcourt, "contrary to his wife's advice—for she is always right," he wrote, had put power into his hands. In the idleness or weakness of old age, he had trusted him with almost all that he possessed. The interest had been paid with regularity. Stories had been fabricated as to the disposal of the money. No securities had ever reached the General's hands, and now—tempted beyond his strength—all was gone. General Harcourt was ruined, and the rogue had fled.

But Mrs. Harcourt's anger and bitter grief had been because this man—who had been the weary thing in her life, and the evil dread whom she saw only in secret, and had never allowed within her home—had been tempted. When she had said to

Marian, "For the first time in my life I have reproached him," she had just asked her husband, "Why did you tempt him? When I have warned you—for *his* sake warned you! He is lost! For ever sunk in guilt! Gone to destruction, because you tempted him! Don't talk to me of money! Where is that poor man's soul?"

He had turned away, unable to answer her. And though she had then stayed and begged him to forgive her, and had declared her repentance, she could not unsay her words. He knew that, and he remembered it when he said to Marian, for the last time, "Your mother is always right!"

When Marian was spoken to by her mother on this matter, all that was said was this—that they must suffer for Herbert now. The first agony of the shock must fall on him, of course. It was not much matter what women did; they could walk meekly, and public attention need never rest on them. But they must save Herbert. It

would be hard to cut down a young tree in the height of its promise, and before it reached its prime.

"You have a practical turn of mind, Marian," said her mother. "Your father said it would be best to trust you. I confessed myself unequal to arranging our future life; we agreed to trust you."

So Marian bent her young head under the load she had to bear, and began, in a trembling way, yet with a strong heart, to do her work. Even Herbert repeated the same thing.

"We must look to you, Marian," he said. "My father was a thorough man of the world. He knew that for my mother to lay out new lines for herself and us to travel on was impossible; besides, it is to the young that these changes come with the least distress. They can make their life from the first what necessity demands. My mother has always obeyed, and you will find her pliable. You need not be afraid

of interference. Act boldly from the beginning."

"Talk about yourself, dear Herbert," Marian answered, with the tears slowly coursing down her face.

"Don't think of me," said Herbert. "A man can always succeed, if he has had his education paid for. I can work in a good way. There is work waiting for me. I shall go to Oxford as soon as I can be spared; I would go to-day, if I could."

"What I want," said Marian, gathering boldness from the pressure laid upon her—"what I want is to know your thoughts, your wishes—to be sure that there will be no going contrary to them through ignorance, or, worse, through a mistaken idea about pleasing you."

"It is so hard to say things on such a subject which at this early moment in our new life shall not seem unkind," said Herbert, sitting down by her, and speaking very gently.

"I don't mistake you. I know so little of the world. I can form only the most misty ideas of what we shall have to do. It would be a mercy if you would speak plainly, bluntly, cruelly, if you like. Make me wiser, Herbert. I shall not misunderstand you. I want to *know*—to comprehend. Give me some fixed ideas. Are you going to make your home with us? Are we to live with you? In what can we be of use to each other?—in what worldly relation is our mother to stand to her son? If you can work, why should not your sisters work? How is it to be?"

"I think, to speak quite plainly, and even to run the risk of being thought selfish——"

"No, I shall not think that," put in Marian.

"Well, then, to be perfectly plain, I should say that whatever kept me in my right place was best for you."

"Yes," said Marian.

"Disagree with me, if you like—don't feel the least bound *not* to argue any point with me. There are many things in which I prefer a woman's sensitiveness to a man's hard reason."

"Go on," said Marian.

"I am the only son. I am a Harcourt. Whatever kept me down would injure you. If I am not weighted with a pauper mother, and two sisters earning their bread, I can conquer my world, and there will still be a Harcourt to the fore," said Herbert, smiling.

"Of course we should be thankful for that."

"All I ask is a fair field," said Herbert. "I go to Oxford, and take my thousand pounds. It would be best for *me*—that is, for the Harcourts, and so finally for *you*, that I should by my own head and hand keep a place, though it can't be the luxurious place it once promised to be, and that you three should make what may be realized do for yourselves without any outcry.

It is sympathy—tears and jabber—that hurt people."

"I quite understand. Thank you," said Marian.

"It sounds badly, I know," said Herbert, his voice trembling; "but, as far as I can see, I say that, on my conscience, I believe it the best thing for all."

"And I believe you," said his sister. "I know enough now. I believe you and thank you, Herbert."

She rose from her chair, put her little hand on his fine brown wavy hair, and kissed his forehead. She thought him a hero! And there was something heroic in seeing a large income leave his purse, and in being deprived of an ancestral home without an angry or a despairing word; and no living man loved the things that houses and money bring to us better than Herbert.

"Do you think you could make our poor mother understand?—and what is to be done about Lizzie?"

"My mother will be easily guided. Lizzie must stay where she is for a year more, or two years, if we can manage it."

And so ended a most important hour in Marian Harcourt's life. Outside their own hearts, General Harcourt's death was easily spoken of. He was seventy-seven years of age! Everyone had known that he had had an illness, and that, although he was about again, he had not recovered from it. Dr. Perran had spoken well of him, but always with a reservation. "He is not a young man, you know. Even old Indian generals don't live for ever." So when, after the one warning, and the sight of the faded eye and weak step, the General died at last, there was no surprise—indeed, why should there have been any? Whether the loss of his fortune had shaken too rudely the last few grains in life's hour-glass, no one could ever know. He was seventy-seven!

But people did gossip a little over Mrs.

Harcourt's absolute calm. "She bears up wonderfully," said Mrs. Trethewry. Mrs. Perran hoped she would not break down by-and-by, all in a minute, as some others had done, and never recover it. A host of distant friends wrote letters. All day long she sat and answered them. Grave, cautious notes they were. When at eight-and-twenty she had married a man turned fifty, of course she knew that she might survive him. Lately she had expected it. She had had time to prepare for the event that had come.

Even the local preacher at the little chapel was astonished at this lady's submission, and mentioned her in his sermon as the valiant woman. But to her children she laid bare the root of her resignation.

"God knows I am grateful to Him," she said. "Your father could not have borne living in reduced circumstances. I don't believe that he ever guessed how bad it will be. He was seventy-seven! He has lived

a grand, good life. And he died—taken from the evil to come. I can hardly believe that so great a mercy has been really vouchsafed to us. I should be a sinner if I was not glad."

And so, literally as soon as was decently possible, without wishing anyone good-bye, Mrs. Harcourt and Marian left Portspadron with Herbert as their escort. He came back very soon, and spoke cheerfully of all things. The servants had each a year's wages. The house was shut up. The wife of one of Mr. Bellingsby's boatmen undertook to take care of it.

"I shall be soon back again," remarked Herbert, as he said "Good-bye" to Mrs. Trethewry. "If I think the Groves dull, I shall come to you."

"Do, my dear. But where's your mother?"

"They are gone to Amiens, for a change, and to see Lizzie," he said.

CHAPTER XI.

PAST AND PRESENT.

What though the radiance which was once so bright,
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower,
We will grieve not; rather find
Strength in what remains behind.

WORDSWORTH.

FIVE years is a long time in anybody's life. But since we last saw Marian five years have passed. Mrs. Harcourt and her two daughters now live in a lodging in London. They had never seen Portspadron since the morning when Marian, her mother, and her brother Herbert had left it for their visit to Amiens. The old life was gone; like a thing forgotten, it had no place in their present life; even as a memory it was silent. Not an allusion was ever made to it. Lizzie

had never been spoken to of the things that had happened in her childhood. Such great facts as she was obliged to hear of she knew, and yet of them she never spoke. It had never been said, but the girl knew that her mother never spoke of the past—*never!* Or only of one point in the past—her own widowhood.

All recollections of the past seemed to gather round that fact. Her widowhood was the one great date in her existence. She was a good deal changed. But she was a patient person, and no one had ever heard her complain. All that anybody knew of this respectable lady, in a black alpaca gown and obtrusively clean caps, was that she was a widow. She had buried her husband fully five years ago, and her sympathy with herself as a poor widow, and what she vaguely called a sufferer, had come to be a habit of mind.

In some way, which no one could explain, Mrs. Harcourt's widowhood appeared to

have separated her from her kind; and yet, to the eye of the world in general, it was distinguished by no more remarkable facts than that she had married a man many years older than herself, and that he had died first. She had invented an expression which, to her own mind, satisfactorily embraced the whole past, and made it unnecessary ever to enter into any particulars. She used to say that what had happened had all been in the course of nature. But by the apparent severity of her resignation she put nature so utterly in the wrong that her hearers would retire from the subject confounded and silenced, and with the air of not desiring to say anything further about so mysterious, misjudging a power.

The course of nature, at this point of our story, was made responsible for many things. That, and other influences, had drifted Mrs. Harcourt and her two daughters into 97, Trowberry Terrace, as "the drawing-room's permanent ladies." And in the parlours lived their landlady, with whom

in the course of their five years residence they had formed a friendship.

Mrs. Grigshaw was a civil, strong-minded woman, who paid her way, and lived in a house beyond her personal requirements. This last fact she had told the civilized world in the columns of the *Times*, soon after Mr. Grigshaw's death; and the result was that Mrs. Harcourt and Marian arrived and took possession. They told Mrs. Grigshaw that they hoped to stay till the Reverend Herbert Harcourt should get a living, and a parsonage house where they could make a home. A year after they first arrived at Ninety-seven Lizzie left school and came to them. Probably the change appeared incomprehensible to the beautiful girl, who of course remembered the Groves and the life at Portspadron. But no other explanation was given to her than that which was contained in her mother's words:

"You know, dear child, that I am a widow now."

In the years that followed, no more was

said; and Lizzie never sought for the information which was never offered. She fell into the ways of the life that her mother and sister led, and supposed, as they never complained, that her mother's widowhood was indeed the explanation of it.

At this date Lizzie was just seventeen years of age, and a lovely, very elegant, and also an accomplished girl; and Marian, who was indefatigable in keeping up the education that her sister had received, was just twenty-two.

If Marian were to be described, it would have to be by negations. She was not anything that she had once been. There was not space enough to be anything. Affirmatively, she was very tired of their small income—only one hundred and eighty pounds a year—and excessively fond of her brother. Her life was one of denial—five years of *No*. It was a blessing that her mother was obedient. If there had been debate, she must have died, or lost her senses. Marian was sadly tired. She had

too much to do in her world, small as it was. She made her mother happy, treated her with unvarying respect, and made everybody else respect her. She petted and scolded and tutored Lizzie, and half broke her heart about her, too, sometimes. She took the management of the money, ordered everything, occasionally cooked the dinner, and always made the clothes. She was a saving, industrious, good young woman, notwithstanding sharp words sometimes, and apparently a total want of sympathy—for sympathy was a luxury, and Marian could not afford it. But to have attained to the almost perfect suppression of self, is to have reached a great height of mental and moral discipline.

When it is further said that Marian's rule was invariably for the good of the governed, and that, if she ever thought of self, it certainly was not till she had thought of everybody else first, it is to be hoped that she may, in some sense, however humble, be looked on as a heroine.

Marian, in the five years that had passed since she was Lizzie's age, had gone through enough to sour as sweet a temper, and age as young a heart; but she had done her work well, with wonderfully little injury to herself. There were these reasons to account for this. There had been no one else to do the work that had to be done. Her father had foreseen it, and trusted her, and she had no feeling for herself—none. There was no Marian in the world now. She did not know in her present self the Marian of the days gone by. And the reason was this—she had never heard one word from Charley Grandison to strengthen her to work, to help her to endure, to bless her with hope.

He had written, in the early part of the five years that had passed, two affectionate letters to her mother. She knew that Herbert at long intervals heard from him still. He sent messages of "love all round" in these letters, and Herbert forwarded the messages often in the copied words of the

writer. So it was true that the Marian whose love for Charley, and whose belief in his love for her had been the very sunshine of life, had died, had been starved to death. That was how she put it to herself when she sometimes thought with great surprise of the faith she had once lived in. He had said "Trust me," and she had trusted him. She could not fix on any hour or day when the trust died out. It had been a gradual work—death by starvation. Probably he never thought of love. If she tried to recall any words or any facts on which to rest an argument by which she might convince herself that he had been her lover, she failed utterly. All his life had been love. She had never known anything else; and when he went away, and said "Trust me," it had been to her like an acknowledgment of what the past had meant, and a promise of what the future would contain. And to this had followed five years of commonplace pleasantnesses, thoughtless assurance—she knew that women could not love like that.

So she would trust him, as probably he had intended her to trust him; she could trust him to be a gentleman—to be always their light-hearted Charley Grandison—a brave soldier, an honourable officer, a good man. Yes, she could trust him never to be a disgrace to the friends of his boyhood. No doubt he had meant no more.

But she had gone through the furnace, and she had come forth from the purification fit for the work that life had brought her—strong to annihilate self, and to live for others—brave in what looked like an ignoble fight with little things. But she did not grow little herself, because her life was hidden, and had about it none of the noise and sparkle that attract the notice of the world. Her beauty had put on a calm countenance, and her manner was that of one never off her guard, and always faithful. She was young, and she could be merry one hour, and almost rudely determined the next; but she was never unkind, and never thoughtless.

Lizzie, having less to think about, indulged in the luxury of wonder, and her wonderings, summed up, would come to the great comprehensive wonder as to whether anything would ever happen again in this world or not.

In this direction Marian also had wonderings. She had made up her mind that as, for Herbert's sake, they could not go forth into the world and work, something ought to happen about Lizzie. To see her young beauty for ever weighed down by their ponderous necessities was too much for Marian to think of without a shudder. She made the world as pleasant as she could for the young girl, but it made her feel heart-sick when she fancied that a day must come when the very dulness of poverty would make so bright a spirit desperate. They had no friends, no interests, no business in life, except to make one shilling do the work of two; and so the elder sister feared that the younger would not always be content to wonder.

That their neighbour's fowls should lay eggs—that the cats should enjoy the sun by the fady-looking lilac-bush—that the individual belonging to the house above them should wash her clothes once a fortnight, and herself, clad in indescribable garments, condescend to pin them on the clothes-line, were not things greatly to excite the mind of a young woman of her years; and yet they were the chief events in Lizzie Harcourt's life, as she observed the world attentively out of the back window every day.

It must be said, however, that Lizzie had made the most of her opportunities. In her sketch-book every variety of arched back which the sight of dogs of any degree belonging to other houses had provoked in Mrs. Grigshaw's cat, was duly marked down with admirable skill. The industrious neighbour had been many times unconsciously immortalized; and a book on the occupation of men's lives in the streets of London might have found speedy illustration in those pages. Lizzie kept up her

natural buoyancy of heart by drawing everybody and everything. She illustrated books; she made Mrs. Grigshaw her debtor by adding pictures to a shilling copy of the "Lady of the Lake" for her, which book was immediately bound gorgeously, and put to repose on a cushion on Mrs. Grigshaw's table. But still Lizzie's world was surprisingly uneventful. There came, however, letters from Herbert.

He wrote every week as regularly as he preached his sermon. Marian wrote every week to him. Mrs. Harcourt always read these letters, and she used to tell Lizzie they were very clever, just such letters as her father would have written, if he had been alive. But sharp scraps of advice, which never met the widowed lady's eyes, deserved that eulogium far more than the neatly-written pages which she so carefully perused.

One of these scraps had gone to Herbert very lately, and, as a specimen of Marian's easiest style, we will give it.

"My dear Herbert, don't, for goodness sake, fall in love with a fine lady. *The slave for life or death of Teresa Mawley!*' Herbert, the man, her father, would marry again in a passion, and have sons. Where would you be? Where would *she* be? You say she loves you. I say you can't afford it. It's immoral. '*They are co-heiresses!*' Of course. I know that. Everybody knows it. Her sister I see almost every day. She drives by here with her daughters—such lovely children—to some place where they have music-lessons. Fancy this Mrs. Belville consenting to her sister marrying *you!* If you can make Mr. Mawley like it, and if he will show his liking by settling seven hundred a year on his daughter, then *do* it, but not for a penny less. And if he does *not* like it, then give up your curacy; fly—do anything! Don't even *think* of marrying her. Perhaps Mr. Mawley would himself take her away, and go out of the country for a few years. Throw yourself on his mercy, and ask him to go. I feel as if I

were going out of my senses at your folly. How could you think of anything so incongruous? I shall not have a quiet moment till you write again."

Three weeks passed. No answer came to this letter, and no sort of change came to Ninety-seven. Marian was more silent than usual. Herbert had only written three lines for each of his weekly despatches. Mrs. Harcourt pined for more news from the world outside her own, and got fault-finding. She had always a grievance at hand, whenever she wanted one, in the street music.

"I don't approve of it, on principle," she said, with a peevish sort of sigh. "Suppose there were sick children, or that one had a headache; and somebody might be dying somewhere, you know. It wouldn't be pleasant, with the overture to 'Tancredi,' which I remember so well."

"No," said Marian, without looking up from her needle-work, with a sort of lingering emphasis on the word; and then she

burst into a nervous laugh, but with tears in her eyes.

Mrs. Harcourt gave a frightened stare. "I don't quite understand you, Marian," she said, and sighed deeply.

"Marian is vexing herself because Herbert never answered her last long letter," said Lizzie, with mischief in her eye. "He certainly has been ungrateful."

"You are very saucy, Lizzie," said Marian, angrily.

"My dears, if there is anything to tell about Herbert, I beg I may hear it."

Lizzie now, in her turn, burst out laughing.

"As if anything was ever going to happen. Oh! I wish there was something to tell."

Mrs. Grigshaw walked in.

"The postman forgot this letter this morning, Mrs. Harcourt. I have reprimanded him, and he has apologized."

"Pray sit down, Mrs. Grigshaw."

"Just for a moment, ma'am, not to refuse your civility. Mrs. Harcourt, you know Mr. Naylor?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, Miss Marian, *you* know, I believe."

"Yes," said Marian, "I made Mr. Naylor's acquaintance in the Winter when we went to that gay children's party at Mr. Rivers's. You will understand who he is in a minute," she went on, speaking to her mother, but hesitating more than was common to her. Mother, do you remember Mrs. and Miss Clayford?"

Mrs. Harcourt looked scared, as anyone might look if knowingly led up to some terrible object, and told to gaze upon it.

"Mrs. Clayford!" exclaimed Lizzie, as her mother did not speak—"*I* never heard of anyone of the name."

"No," said Marian, in her softest voice, "it was not an acquaintance of very long duration; and it all happened when you were at school."

"I remember," said Mrs. Harcourt, in a tone of quite unnatural solemnity. It sound-

ed painfully, recalling an hour long since reckoned with the past.

"Mary Clayford married Mr. Garret Naylor. Everybody knows him. He is one of the most distinguished barristers in the kingdom."

"Of course everybody knows him. I read his name in newspapers," said Mrs. Harcourt, with superhuman gravity.

"They are all one family—his family and that of this Mr. Naylor of whom we are speaking. He told me all about it that evening. This old man's——"

"Old!" exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt, with uncalled for surprise—"old!"

"The man I talked to was old, but he had a son to whom I did not speak, I think. Old Mr. Naylor's father and Mr. Garret Naylor's grandfather were brothers."

"Oh! don't talk genealogy," sighed Mrs. Harcourt.

"It is only to explain *who* he is. *What* he is we must come to now."

"But why?" asked Mrs. Harcourt, with

such a despairing absence of all interest in the subject as would have silenced anyone but Marian.

She stopped for a moment, thinking how she would go on, and Mrs. Grigshaw filled up the silence by saying pathetically, "Now have a little patience, ma'am," and that had the immediate effect of turning Mrs. Harcourt into a sufferer, and making her listen to what anybody might choose to say.

"Let me explain it, madam," said Mrs. Grigshaw, most respectfully. "It has to do with me and mine, if you will permit me."

Mrs. Harcourt condescendingly moved her head, and Mrs. Grigshaw, with hands folded in her lap, began her story.

"This elder Mr. Naylor's first start in life was with a chemist and druggist, ma'am—druggist!" Mrs. Grigshaw repeated, with emphasis—"own eldest brother, and like a father, to my late husband, and a great man in his way. There Mr. Naylor got a notion, by going to lectures and studying hard, of the

sciences of chemistry and electricity, taking also to experimenting for himself no end. He got my husband, then a young man, to help him; which he did, being very much attached to Mr. Naylor, then a younger man than himself. This," said Mrs. Grigshaw, with solemnity, "was my husband's first introduction to physical science."

Mrs. Harcourt once more bowed her head, as marking her interest in her friend's narration.

"Mr. Naylor, ma'am, had every encouragement. There was the necessary money, and great pleasure was shown on the part of his friends at the prospect of his turning out great, and a genius. He went steadily on. My husband became his paid assistant, and then we married. Mr. Naylor lodged with us until he had a home of his own. He is a great man now, and he never forgets me; he is as humble as he is great, and his son is quite beyond anything that my words can describe."

"It is all very interesting," sighed Mrs. Harcourt.

"He is a rich man now from many sources," said Marian.

"Yes," interrupted Mrs. Grigshaw, "and is devoted to floriculture, and thought a deal of by Royalty even, I assure you; and at Kew everlastingly trying experiments, with a name well known, and an only son, an artist and architect, doing well, as clever as clever can be, but unmarried," said Mrs. Grigshaw, all in a breath. "Those two take tea with me at eight o'clock. Dear madam and young ladies, give me your company. I should esteem it a favour, Mrs. Harcourt."

Mrs. Harcourt drew herself up, and said since she had been a widow she had never gone out.

"This isn't *out*," whispered Lizzie.

Mrs. Grigshaw looked at Marian. "A moment's conversation with you in private," she whispered; and they left the room together.

When Marian came back, Mrs. Harcourt

was reading her letter, and she was murmuring forth its contents.

"Going to write to me at full length on an important matter to-morrow, or the day after. Dear me! And there is nothing more in the letter. He sends his love to you both, my dears."

"I am going to walk, mamma. If you can spare us both, I would take Lizzie," said Marian. "And does not Herbert send any more than *that* to me?"

"That is all, love. But he promises more. What can he have to say? 'An important subject!'—Marian, what can it be?"

"Perhaps he has got a living, and the day for our assembling at the parsonage has arrived."

Marian spoke bitterly. Lizzie clapped her hands.

"I hope I may not die of joy. Oh! mamma! mamma!"

"Hush, Lizzie." Tears sprang to Marian's eyes. "Oh! what can make me so detestably ill-natured? I am a bad example to

you, Lizzie. Please to put your hat on. There is no such joy coming into Herbert's life. Go—go; make haste."

Lizzie rushed out of the room. She had lingered looking at the unwonted tears on the hard-working sister's face. There was a strange influence among them that day, and Lizzie knew that she had something more than usual to wonder at.

When the sisters were in the open air, they walked on briskly. Poor as they were, they felt that to possess a key to the neighbouring gardens was a necessary luxury. They were soon among the budding shrubs, for it was the end of April, and enjoying the pleasantness of their feet on the turf.

"Lizzie, there is something to say," began Marian.

"To say to *me?*"

"Yes; you listen well when I speak to you, I think."

"You speak so seldom."

"Will you listen now? It concerns yourself."

"Myself is an uninteresting subject."

"Not to me."

"Oh, Marian!"

The sisters paused in their walk, and looked at each other.

"I so wish you were well married," said the elder one; and then the younger, blushing like a rose, and looking as lovely, said,

"Oh! so do I," laughing merrily at her own words till Marian laughed too.

"I am quite serious, Lizzie," began the good sister once more. "I am tired of poverty. I never wish you to be as I am. I alone could take care of our dear mother. She has lived her life, and she is now, I think, contented with the silent contemplation of it. I have no life, and never shall do more than breathe, I suppose; but for you I have wishes, and they are wise ones, I assure you."

"While I have wondered and gazed, and contemplated the backs of the houses in the next street, and the sky between the chimneys, I have said that wishes were bad things.

I gave them up long ago," said the girl.

"Vague wishes are useless. Wishes after the impossible are unhealthy. But I only wish a very reasonable thing for you."

"Oh! what shall I do? Can I go forth and conquer a man? I am afraid that I have a deep-seated conviction that he ought to conquer me."

"I hope he may conquer you. You have unconsciously done your part. Mr. Naylor—"

"He's like my grandfather!"

"It is his son."

"I never saw him."

"You will see him to-night. He saw you at Mr. Rivers's party last Christmas; he has been talking of you, and inquiring about you, and getting glimpses of you. His father has proposed to bring him to-night to Mrs. Grigshaw; Mrs. Grigshaw has told me the story; I have had an interview with the old man, who fears that we may scorn the alliance because he comes of those who work, and *we* eat the bread of *saving*. I thought it best not to understand that

part of his conversation. It would have been absurd of me to notice such fears; the son labours in the profession of a gentleman, and he is a handsome, educated man, and your romantic admirer. You look quite pale, Lizzie. Have I frightened you?"

"Must I do it?" the girl asked.

"You can meet Frederick Naylor to-night. Have I done right to tell you? I thought that I ought to tell you. It can rest as a secret between us. I could not play you a trick, Lizzie."

"My straightforward sister," she said; "but I have been dreaming of Herbert's parsonage, and training a westeria over the porch for fully three years, in my most laborious and persevering imagination."

"Have a westeria of your own," was the answer, given shortly, and with scarcely disguised asperity. "I am going to spend sixpence in two or three flowers. I believe you would look best with a spray of maiden's hair in your head, and a white narcissus."

CHAPTER XII.

LOVERS.

My days have been so wondrous free,
The little birds that fly,
With careless ease from tree to tree,
Were but as blest as I.

PARNELL.

LIZZIE looked even unusually lovely. Her mother's sigh was deep as any groan.

"I wish you went out oftener, child; but since, in the course of nature——"

"Oh! mother, this is only walking downstairs. I never want to 'go out.' Marian says she is going to make you come down after tea for an hour. She is taking out your gown now, but she does not think you can dress yourself."

"Marian has such a strong will," sighed Mrs. Harcourt. Lizzie stopped her mother's mouth with a kiss.

Now the elder sister walked in, soberly clad in a black silk gown, but looking very handsome, with a scrap of fine white lace in her almost black hair. The sisters formed a great contrast to each other, Marian being as gravely, softly beautiful as Lizzie was brilliantly lovely.

"So you are going, children?" said their mother. "I don't know whether I like it or not. I wish I had thought of asking Herbert. I have made it such a point never to go out."

"Herbert may manage his own life without interfering with ours," said Marian. "I shall come up and dress you, mother, so that you can be downstairs at nine o'clock."

Perhaps it would be scarcely the exact truth to say that before nine o'clock Lizzie was in love. But some mysterious change she had undoubtedly undergone, and the

change had been produced through the agency of Frederick Naylor. His looks, which were handsome; his portfolio of drawings and plans, which were beautiful; his talk, which was new; and his shy admiration, which was infatuating, had a powerful effect upon her. She enjoyed the excitement of her novel circumstances, and, rather than have lost sight of Frederick Naylor for ever, she would probably have married him that night.

"He is my only boy—dear! dear!" said his father to Marian. "I have a daughter, well-married in the City. I could give your sister a settlement, and I would do so. Well, well! I want my boy to be happy. I hope you will do your best for us. Ever since I lost my dear wife I have had my great comfort in my boy. I could not bear him to be thwarted, Miss Harcourt. He is as good as gold, and getting on well. It is a good profession; yes, yes, a gentleman's profession. She is the prettiest creature I

ever beheld. She shall have two thousand pounds in the three-and-a-half per cents. for pin-money. God bless her! I hope she'll say 'Yes.'"

Mr. Naylor had a droll, fondling way of speaking, which amused Marian, and yet made her like him. He doubled his little pet words in a way which, with his kind manner and gentle voice, was quite endearing.

"I am going to fetch my mother," said Marian, with a smile.

The entrance of Mrs. Harcourt made an effective moment. A general standing up; a solemn bow from old Mr. Naylor; a blush of guilt on his son's frank face. "I am obliged to you, ma'am," from Mrs. Grigshaw, and a settling of her mother into a chair by Marian, with as much care as if she had been blind, or a cripple.

From that moment Mrs. Harcourt was an overpowering fact in that small assembly of admiring friends. It pleased her; and her

sighs had soft music in them. It had come into the course of nature that she should be fêted, and considered like a heroine. The fact of the field of honour being good, Mrs. Grigshaw's parlour was forgotten. Something above and beyond her usual experience was happening to her. A fine young man was speaking in a flattering manner of things beyond her intelligence. She liked it, as the ignorant admire long words and scraps of Latin. Everybody was supremely attentive. She never guessed that somehow or other every small fact had been suggested and arranged by Marian. She was finally carried off upstairs from an atmosphere of smiles and bows, feeling that she had condescended, she could scarcely tell how, but certainly in a gracious and Christian manner, and in a state of crowned humility, with much natural interior self-approval, she went to rest without her frequent sleeping-draught, and never waked till Marian, in the morning, advised her, with a kiss

and a kind "good day" to breakfast in bed.

Within a very short time Lizzie was engaged to marry Mr. Navior. And then came Mrs. Harcourt's fears as to whether it was right. She had consented, and in a business-like manner had accepted for her daughter the offered two thousand pounds from the elder Mr. Navior, and had shown him her husband's will, which secured twelve hundred pounds to each of his daughters on their mother's death; but she said to Marian,

"Of course all I say goes for nothing till your brother knows."

"Herbert has nothing to do with it. But it is time that you should write and tell him."

"It is a very difficult letter to write, my love," said Mrs. Harcourt, sententiously.

"It is never difficult to tell the truth," said Marian.

"My love, I thought you always respected your brother."

"I love him extremely, which is more to the purpose; but I am not going to let him interfere with Lizzie's happiness. It is a very good thing for Lizzie to marry Mr. Frederick Naylor. She will make him a delightful wife. And Herbert is very likely to make a donkey of himself unless you write very positively to him."

"Why, Marian——"

"Oh! I know what I am talking about. He has taken to neglect us lately. I wish you would write him a good strong letter. I'd indite it to you if you would let me."

So between the two this letter was sent to Herbert:—

"My dear and only Son,

"You can never know—only one who in the course of nature has been made a widow, which may be your future wife's experience, though never I hope to happen—what a responsibility children are to me. I am going to be relieved in some

degree. Lizzie is going to be married. If your father had been alive, of course his advice and consent would have been asked. I have not consulted you, dear Herbert, though I shall wish you to perform the interesting ceremony. I think she must be married in the white India muslin, which was never made up over, Japanese silk. Mrs. Grigshaw is very kind, and she and Marian are busy about the preparations. Rejoice with us, my dear son, and prepare to bless your sister."

The letter being written thus far, it was shown to Marian, who observed gently,

"You have never told him the man's name."

"Ah! there lies the difficulty," sighed Mrs. Harcourt.

Marian put the pen into her mother's hand, and placed the sheet of paper again before her. She began to indite.

"My future son-in-law is Mr. Frederick Naylor, the architect whose name is getting

so well known in the profession; of the Trevarna family. You may have heard of his father; a man of science—a chemist. He is rich, I believe. This young man is an only son. I have met the father, and everything is satisfactory."

Mrs. Harcourt read it.

"It reads very hard," she said.

"It is best. Herbert must not be allowed to think that he is advised with."

"Oh, Marian!"

"It is too late; but ever to have allowed a brother's feelings to prevent a sister's settlement in life with a man certainly to be admired and respected, and sure to make a good husband, would have been improper." While she spoke she was fastening up the letter. "Of course," she went on, "Herbert will be vexed—his pride will rebel; but *we*," with emphasis, "shall be thankful to see Lizzie loved, and beyond want and care."

With a very genuine sigh, Mrs. Harcourt

assented. By good or evil luck, a letter from Herbert crossed this letter of his mother's to him. When she had read it, she hurried off to Marian in a flutter of distress.

"Oh! I don't know what to say, my dear girl. He is going to marry Miss Mawley, the niece of Lord Mawley, and the sister and co-heiress of that grand Mrs. Belville. Oh! I don't know what to say!"

"Has Mr. Mawley consented?"

"At last, and unwillingly. He gives his daughter two hundred a year—that is, he doubles what he has always given her for her clothes, and promises to leave it to her at his death."

"Indeed!" said Marian. "Tell him he had better get a curacy in London, and come and live with us." She spoke very bitterly.

"You can't mean that, Marian?"

"I only mean that he will marry to discontent and want," she said, "and I wish you would tell him so."

"I am exceedingly sorry."

"Say so."

"But she will be an heiress."

"Not if Mr. Mawley marries again and has children."

"How dreadful!"

"Do say so. What is the use of saying it *here*, and to *me?*"

"It would do no good to say so."

"I think differently. He ought to bring his wife into our family with a true knowledge of what we feel. *His* happiness is risked as well as *hers*."

"That is very well said." Mrs. Harcourt looked sagacious. "I will take your advice, Marian."

"You'll hear again to-morrow," said Marian—"don't write to-day."

And the next day indeed brought a letter, and a very surprising one, to say the least of it. Herbert could not tell his beloved Teresa of the misfortune they had allowed to fall upon him. Lizzie marry Frederick

Naylor! What *could* Mr. Mawley say? To ignore the whole thing was all that he was equal to at present. Marian, in her secret heart, felt outraged.

"Let me answer it, dear mother. Herbert will repent, and we won't say a word of this silly letter to Lizzie."

Poor Mrs. Harcourt was like one dazed.

"Is it silly? You know he has had a great deal of money spent on his education. He will only share with you when I die. Altogether, he has cost a thousand pounds, and she will have two hundred a year."

"Yes, and ten children, and how much she will give up! Poor girl! I really am sorry for her. It's an unprincipled thing on Herbert's part."

Marian knew she was angry, but she had a way of economizing her anger; so she said to herself, "I will write immediately, before Lizzie comes home; and then I shall not be in a rage twice over." Lizzie was gone to spend the afternoon at the elder

Mr. Naylor's country house, under the care of Mrs. Grigshaw.

"Dear Herbert," she began, "you know you ought to have answered my letter. I said I should not have a happy moment till you did. But I was not a good prophetess. Lizzie is so happy that I am rejoiced. You were wrong to talk proudly. If you, who have only yourself, and the results of your labour, to give to a wife, choose to take one, why should not Mr. Naylor, who has an inheritance, besides his profession, do the same thing? He will endow and maintain Lizzie, and she will do credit to him. If the best we can hope for happens, the lady, in your case, will endow you. *Chacun à son gout.* I hope you and yours, when she *is* yours, will be as happy as Frederick and our blooming sister. My mother is going to have hot-house strawberries for tea. I have spent twopence—after some consideration as to how much I could afford—on a muffin, to do honour to old Mr. Naylor's fruit. He is devoted to gardening, and his place is as

lovely as you can imagine. I feel in a dream when I think of Lizzie, and their love, and the good-will on all sides. When you come here to marry them you must *look* and *be* your best. We are grown fastidious since we have been so much in educated company. Write us a pleasant letter, which we can show to Lizzie. We thought your last was written in a hurry, and we have kept it to ourselves."

Then there came a postscript.

"Here is Lizzie. She comes in like Peace and Plenty, with flowers and fruit. The house is filled with fragrance. We shall be obliged to call in the sick and the poor, to divide the spoils. We will let you know in good time, but I think the wedding will be about the middle of next month."

This letter was ended in a loving, sisterly manner. As Herbert read it he felt subdued. He was mortified, and became small in his own opinion. He wished—he could scarcely say what he wished—*almost* that he had never fallen in love.

CHAPTER XIII.

HERBERT AT HOME.

Then farewell care, and farewell woe;
I will no longer pine;
For I'll believe I have her heart,
As much as she has mine.

SUCKLING.

HOW and why people fall in love would be inquiries full of the sublimest interest, if any end to them could ever be foreseen. The bravest pause before a work which in its nature is, or ought to be, endless. But how Herbert Harcourt fell in love may be suggested, as that individual is not by to suffer agonies in the endeavour to contradict us. There was nothing else to do, or there were many things the doing of

which led naturally up to that thing which at last occurred. Then, also Herbert Harcourt was pleasant to look at. It is nonsense to try to undervalue the influence of good looks. It is natural to wish to possess what is beautiful, and Herbert was twenty-eight years of age, and remarkably handsome. His face, manner, and abilities had been excellent letters of introduction to him. At a most welcome moment he had been asked, after his father's death, to take the charge of the Honourable Marmaduke Mawley, Lord Mawley's only son, and the nephew of Teresa's father.

Lord Mawley had been twice married. With his first wife there had been no family. Marmaduke was the son of the existing Baroness, and she had made up her mind that Herbert was exactly the person to take care of her boy.

He had accepted the charge, cared for him, crammed him, got him through the schools, and earned his father's blessing

and his mother's tears. And, further, Marmaduke, having made a prolonged tour through the south of Europe with his friend and tutor, vowed that his home would be unfit to live in without him, and he was in consequence invited there to continue the daily reading, writing, rowing, varied with cricket and croquet, with three hundred a year, board, lodging, and a horse to ride.

Things had gone on in a lazy state of mutual satisfaction. But Herbert had intended to be a clergyman, and so, when Marmaduke evidently was out of leading strings, the intention was fulfilled. Herbert was ordained, and became curate to the learned old rector of Mawley, who delighted in him; and by some arrangement between the Rector and "my lord," an income of three hundred a year, and a back wing of the large Rectory house, was bestowed on Herbert, who, with his usual good management, did very well under the care of an old woman, who described herself as cook-

ing for everybody, and a boy in a suit of pepper and salt, who appeared at the door, with the grand manner of London itself, and waited luncheon—of bread and cheese and claret—quite to perfection.

Herbert had knowledge and taste. He had furnished his rooms with pickings from —not the lodgings, but the unforgotten, dear old home. His mother and sisters were glad to be relieved of the things he sought after. "Little teas" to Lady Mawley were served with silver fit for a museum. She eat off Sêvres china, and the water-biscuits were kept in a priceless Wedgewood jar. There never was such a looking-glass! It was of the date of Queen Anne, and of a pattern quite unique. The corners of the room were furnished with shelves full of old English ware, the savings from the housekeeper's cupboards of long ago; and the *portière* that kept away the draft from the double doors was a grand old piece of Indian tapestry.

Lady Mawley often visited Herbert. It ought to be understood that Herbert had as nearly as possible nothing to do, and also that he faithfully did it. Lady Mawley went, and perpetually took the motherless Teresa; and Teresa was gentle, rather pretty, and very engaging. Herbert rowed them in a boat on the fairest lake that eyes ever rested on. The park came down to the water's edge on each side; trees grew close down to the washing wavelets, and got mirrored there in shadows that danced to the sweet music of the plashing against the shore. It saved the ladies a long walk to row them across. It was done lazily—talking, smiling, lingering over the enjoyment on a Summer afternoon. Then Herbert would tie his boat to the mooring provided by Nature—the huge limbs of an overhanging willow—and help the ladies out.

Teresa required unusual attention. "She was so very apt to slip," Lady Mawley said, quite forgetful of consequences. And Te-

resa was so afraid of cattle, and there were horned things turned out in the park, so Herbert had to walk by them to the Hall; and then he would take Teresa home by himself in the boat—actually! But Mr. Herbert Harcourt had known them all so long; and Teresa's home, the Grange, was on the confines of the Park—just the other side of the lake. It would have been nonsense to get out the pony-carriage when the boat was ready, and Mr. Harcourt waiting; and they could walk down to the willow-tree by themselves and get in.

The transit across the lake took a long time occasionally. With arms resting on the oars, they drifted with the current, and there couldn't be any harm in it, for all the world could see. They fed the swans, and went after those wonderful ducks, till they suddenly dived, and evaded both sight and pursuit at once. They had to rest after this, of course. Teresa was politely and naturally anxious that Mr. Harcourt should

not be tired. The landing, however, would be effected at last—with great care on Herbert's part; with a carelessness that required a reprimand of the most agreeable kind on the lady's. Then, through the grass, where the cowslips were in flower, and the blue hyacinths bursting their buds, the girl would go up by herself rapidly, and perhaps meet Mr. Mawley in front of the Grange.

"Where have you been, Teresa?"

"At the Hall, walking about with my aunt. Mr. Harcourt brought me home in the boat."

"I wish he had come on; I want his advice. There's a catalogue just arrived from town, and I can't make one thing out."

"Why not send to Mr. Harcourt?—he is at home by this time."

So Herbert would be sent for, and for a whole evening he would devote himself to Mr. Mawley and the thing of the greatest momentary interest; for Mr. Mawley was

very rich, and a collector of many things, which all had their turn.

He was a widower, and between Mrs. Belville and Teresa he had lost two boys. The sorrow had been great, and the vexation had been considerable. The estate had been so settled that the girls could only have it in the event of there being no sons on Mr. Mawley's death. Teresa, therefore, was only a speculation, though a very good one.

At last the truth came out. Herbert Harcourt and Teresa wished to be married. Lady Mawley said at once that she could not see any real objection.

"He is so charming," she said. "If ever a girl is to do a silly thing, Mr. Harcourt is the man to do it with. We must push him on. He might be a Bishop."

"I am very sorry—very sorry indeed," said my lord, in a peremptory manner.

But Mr. Mawley said, "I forbid the thing!—I forbid it utterly!"

It was all he said to Teresa—it was all the answer he gave to her tears. She said she could never make him understand, but, in truth, his knowledge went a good deal beyond hers, and his refusal to listen to arguments was exceedingly wise.

Nearly a year went on. Herbert Harcourt made the best of his time. If he was only pleasant to Teresa at moments which really were like angels' visits, he courted Mr. Mawley systematically; and then he spoke once more. The unwilling consent was given, but Mr. Mawley said he should certainly marry again. The lovers told him he was very wise—they hoped he would. They assured him it was the one thing they wanted; they flattered him unconsciously, and they named their own wedding-day, and wished they could be as sure of his.

The young people were to begin life in Herbert's rooms at the Rectory on five hundred a year. What could they desire better? Teresa never wished to go to town

any more, unless it was to see Mrs. Harcourt and his sisters. She so longed to see them. Must they come to the wedding? It would be very difficult to manage, because there was no place for them to go to. But Herbert settled the question quickly. Marian never left his mother, and Lizzie was engaged with some new friends. Then they would marry without them, and they could go and see them in London afterwards. Yes, they could, and they would. Herbert screwed up his courage.

But everything was so different at Ninety-seven from the Hall, the Grange, the Rectory, the lakes, the mirrored trees, the sailing swans, and the diving ducks. His imagination made things worse than the truth, and his spirit was wrung with vexation. But he couldn't help it.

Marian was as good as Teresa. Lizzie was lovelier. His mother was no worse than a score of titled dowagers he could mention; and an income of only one hundred and

eighty pounds a year for three persons, and a servant girl, made many things not only necessary, but right. It was the horror of contrast that troubled him; and then came Marian's letter, and another contrast. She had told of hot-house fruit, and a luxurious muffin, price twopence. There was the scientific chemist, and his house, and beautiful gardens; there was the talked-of, talented, rising architect, who could afford a wife, and intended, with reason, to clothe her in fine linen, keep her in affluence, and endow her with all that brings ease to life; and there was himself, in the midst of beauty and elegance, asking a woman to leave her rights in cultivated life, to share his struggle for existence. It might come to a struggle. He did not wish to have Marian at his wedding, and yet he knew that his wife might have to go to this brave sister to learn how best to spend her pence in bread.

Herbert hated himself for fully five minutes because he had not suffered. Then he cor-

rected himself. His loss had been greatest. He had been an only son. His own energies had won him present affluence. But his future—what was *that?*

The end of these reflections was, as we have said, he almost repented he had ever fallen in love. But further thought made him write a conciliatory letter to his mother.

"Quite fit to be seen," was that mother's comment, and it was seen that night by Frederick Naylor and Lizzie, and at the same time Herbert's engagement to Miss Mawley was announced.

"The letter, my dears, wants a little explanation; and dear Marian allows me to give it. She does not like this match of Herbert's, and, somehow, I am sure very kindly, she made a point of saying it."

"We are better, all of us, for my saying what I said," added Marian; "but I suppose I do the right thing in the wrong way, or that as somebody must do the disagreeables

of life, it has fallen on me to do them. I think such things can't be done without some fuss, and that makes noise, and the noise is mistaken for worse than it is, when, in fact, it is only——"

"The sound of the guardian angel's wings," said Frederick Naylor, who, with pencil in hand, was engaged in designing a being of a celestial order, for a sculptor whom he supplied with designs for working.

"Oh! thank you!" she cried, with a trembling voice; and they were so happy together in the Ninety-seven drawing-room that they forgot everyone but themselves.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN INTERVIEW.

No dungeon's walls, no cell confined,
Can cramp the energies of mind!

KIRKE WHITE.

MARIAN'S troubles were by no means over. She was the active partner in the family firm, and to do everything for everybody had become her vocation. Her mother had become what we have seen. Lizzie had given herself up to her happiness, and Frederick Naylor was like a son in the house already.

Happiness had really walked into the lodgings at Ninety-seven, and taken possession. A sense of blessing pervaded the place. It made Marian grave and thankful,

with a sweet, tender smile keeping the door of her life, and her tearful eyes cast down. Her mother wept outright in occasional bursts of gladness. The fate of the beautiful youngest-born was fixed. Marian and her mother looked oceans of unspoken sympathy into each other's faces, and a new life seemed to have come to both of them.

The practical Mrs. Grigshaw was great in the sincerity of her friendship. Of the fruits of the earth *out of their season*—the desire of all hearts—old Mr. Naylor frequently sent her a plentiful share; and in return she paid him long visits, during which she counted towels, measured sheets, disturbed the whole neighbourhood by tearing dimity, and calculated new carpets to an inch. Mr. Naylor was conspiring secretly with Mrs. Grigshaw to fill Frederick's cupboards with more table-cloths than he could wear out in ten years, and other household articles in proportion. They were delightful times, and lasted longer than such

times generally do—nearly three weeks—without a woe.

Woe came, clad in splendid raiment, in the sweetest of carriages, with two servants, and a pair of bay horses, with black manes and tails. The arrival of the grand Mrs. Belville was announced in a scared manner by Rachel, the cleverest maid-of-all-work, who had that day been so faithful to her name and profession as not to have had time to clean herself—a fact which she declared with fervent regrets to a footman six feet high, who looked profoundly astonished at the confidence reposed in him, and quite as if he did not know what to do with it.

"My love, this is very polite and complimentary; but not the least expecting it, I have only this old alpaca gown on—what shall I do?" asked Mrs. Harcourt.

"Somebody must see her," said Marian, mildly. "We are at home," she added to the woman-servant. "I wonder what she wants?"

Whether this concluding inquiry was innocently forwarded through the flushed and flurried maid to the personage within the beautiful carriage is not known to history, but the next tidings were that Mrs. Belville wanted to see Miss Harcourt.

"What a mercy! I can't go. I am so glad she wants to see *you*. Are you going down to her?"

Marian meditated. She never spoke, but left the room. Going downstairs she saw the magnificent attire of their visitor filling the hall.

"We live upstairs," said Marian, standing on the fourth step from the bottom. "The rooms on the ground-floor are not ours."

"But I can go in for ten minutes; and I don't want to stay," remonstrated the great lady.

"May I ask what you want?"

This Marian said very softly, and standing by the lady's side; but in her voice, soft as it was, the hearer felt there was an in-

flexible determination to be treated like a gentlewoman, or to turn her visitor's magnificent self out of the house.

Mrs. Belville was several years older than her sister, Teresa Mawley. She was a fair, fat, pretty woman, who could not help showing any interior vexation on her face and in her manner. She got red, and fussy in her movements; but all that was mere constitutional nervousness. She was by no means a cowardly woman, and she had acquired a considerable knowledge of human nature in her intercourse with mankind.

"I can't bear going up steep stairs," she said—"that is all."

Marian opened the door of Mrs. Grigshaw's front parlour. She could not help smiling, for it was a very different place from the drawing-room where the mother and sisters lived. A great heap of towels was on the floor, and the round table was covered with papers, and a few numbers, terribly thumbed, of a penny magazine.

But the doors into the back-room were standing open, and the beech-trees in tender green leaves, were now waving their branches gently in the sun. The leafy screen from the back-gardens of the houses in the opposite street was a pretty incident, and looked *very* pretty at that moment, so that Mrs. Belville, having given one look of disgust all round, ended her examination with a surprised "Dear me!"

"Would you like to sit down?"

Marian glanced from violet velvet to a black horse-hair covered chair.

"No, thank you," said Mrs. Belville, in a hurry.

Then Marian stood still and looked at her.

"I want to say something to you about this ridiculous idea of your brother marrying my sister, Miss Mawley."

"I think him so unfortunate in his choice, that I would rather not discuss it with Miss Mawley's sister. Besides, it is no affair of

mine. Men choose. Women have the right to say *No.* If your sister has chosen to say *Yes,* I can be sorry for the burden that she *must* for ever be on the heart and head of a poor man—but I have no right to discuss the thing with you, or anyone else. I told Herbert what I felt, and gave him, as I hoped in good time, my opinion. It was quite useless, of course. I have no more to say."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mrs. Belville. "I shall prevent it, if possible," added that lady.

Marian never spoke.

"You don't mean to say you expected him to marry better?" asked Mrs. Belville, staring, with a smile on her face, at Marian.

"Yes, I did," she answered courageously. "He had a right to choose a gentlewoman. He can show his *seize quartiers;* and might have been a Knight of Malta, if he had lived even in the most punctilious days. There are noblemen who can't do *that,* you know."

She looked gaily round, and it occurred

to Mrs. Belville that Marian was very good-looking.

"I should have liked him to marry one who could have helped him—some one who, in marrying, would not have felt that she was giving anything up for him—so much up for him, I mean. If either had had money enough to secure independence, I should not have minded; but Mr. Mawley is certain to marry again. From all I hear, he is exactly the kind of man who could not live in an empty house."

"It is the most abominable thing! Do you know that it may be the means of cheating *me*, of keeping my girls out of what ought to have been their mother's fortune. Fully six thousand a year will go to a son, if he has one. This would be divided between us if—if—really"—she was sobbing now—"really for that abominable girl to marry at all is a shame; but to marry to vex my father, to annoy everybody—" Into the old horse-hair easy-chair the well-dressed

lady sank, unmindful of fine lace and velvet skirts, and there she cried and sobbed herself into a state inconvenient to witness.

"I have no answer to make to you," said Marian. "I know what poverty is—poverty and I are old friends, and we shake hands every day. But Herbert and your sister know nothing about it. And when they see poverty, they will treat it as an enemy; and that never answers, I assure you. Of course you don't understand a word I say. I am so sorry we can't offer you a glass of wine. We never keep it. But a cup of tea I could give you in five minutes."

"It is *such* a woe!" gasped Mrs. Bellville, rising.

"So it is, to prudent friends, who look forward to the clergyman's ten children, and the overworked woman, and untidy house. How miserable Herbert would be!" groaned Marian.

"You need not return this call, you

know," said Mrs. Belville, sweeping by towards the door.

"I will return it when I have something pleasanter to say to you than you have had to say to me. Will you take a token of good-will?"

Marian offered her guest a spray of one of the rarest orchids known.

"In the name of wonder!" Mrs. Belville was astonished out of herself. "Is it yours?"

"Yes; my flowers were arranged here for Mr. Naylor's use. He was drawing from them."

"Mr. Naylor, the architect, who is giving the designs for Lord Reinecourt's church?"

"Yes; he is going to marry my sister."

Mrs. Belville pushed by, never touched the flowers, hurried through the passage, stumbled down the steps, and got into the carriage in an ungraceful hurry. The scene was over; Marian went laughing upstairs.

"Well, my love?" inquired her mother, in a voice of contentment.

"It is all quite well. She hates the match and me, and I am pretty much of her mind. She did not come to call on anybody, only to be insolent, mother."

"Oh! child, how hard you are!"

Marian, laughing, again sat down to her work. After a while, she said,

"If any more of Miss Mawley's friends or relatives call, *you* must see them, mother. I really have done enough of my duty towards my neighbour this morning to last me six months. I am quite serious. You must brace up your nerves, put on your silk gown, and do valiantly whatever the happy bridegroom's mother ought to do. I have made a sacrifice of myself once, and that is all that Herbert ought to expect."

"The Belvilles are respectable, successful people. They were great tradesmen in a past generation, and made a vast fortune.

Mr. Naylor talked it over with me the other day."

Mrs. Harcourt gossiped on, and Marian worked as hard as any sempstress could work. It seemed to her that her mother was inventing fairy-tales for her amusement. Some men had gone up in the world, and some down, to rise or to fall again, as the case might be, like boys playing at see-saw, or to fall for ever prostrate, and be trodden under the feet of men. Life's story went on in a sort of chant as Marian worked and worked away, one long seam after another, for an hour or more; she scarcely heard the story that was unwinding, but she was, without any conscious effort, providing the commentary, and reckoning up the Mrs. Belvilles who had walked over their neighbour's feet; the Teresas, crowned with silly hopes of doing that which to them was the impossible; the unsuspecting happy ones, like Lizzie, who had waked out of a dull youth to the promise of active, loving, blissful

wifehood; and the Marians, whose histories are untold, because no earthly historian ever counted weary steps, wistful on-lookings, and those hits and hardships which are all nails in the coffin of such as they must be.

Marian's thoughts kept pace in this manner with her mother's examples; and then, when silence came, and Mrs. Harcourt left her ceaselessly-working daughter to take her afternoon turn on the sunny side of the neighbouring square, Marian took up, in her imagination, her brother Herbert's story, and began gloomily to paint his history.

"How can they live on it? How can *she?*" I should have said were her first muttered thoughts. And then came the calculations of the things that would, to them, be *necessaries.*

"Five hundred a year! A cook and housemaid, and *her* maid; she can't do without *that.* That will be, in food and wages, £150 a year. The pony-carriage, and man-of-all-

work, will be fully £80 more, which will be £230. Their own food, and friends occasionally, will be fully £150; and, with wine, £20 more, that is £400 a year. I will allow her £50 for clothes, £10 for pocket-money,—I should not think she could bring herself all at once to less,—and £25 for his clothes, and £5 for pocket-money, that is another £90, and turnpikes £5, and washing £20,—I am putting everything down at the lowest,—rates and taxes £5, wear and tear of things in and out of the house £10, that makes £125 to be added on to the £400,—I have not reckoned candles,—and it is exactly £25 more than they have got; and I omitted coals. How could Herbert be so cruel to a poor young girl who has never had a thought to give to ways and means in her life! 'Tis dismal! I can't bear to think of it!" And Marian rose up, and gave a clever shake to her work. "There! In a few days that good, patient, unmurmuring

mother of ours will have a new dressing-gown, and how she will enjoy it! Trimmed, too, with smart embroidery. I wonder if I have courage left to make another for Lizzie? No; there could be no merit in that, and I am greedy of merit, I suppose. Alas! my chafing robs me of such earnings, I fear!"

She had a habit of answering her thoughts by murmuring sounds, which to herself became language. "Marian's grumblings," these small meditative notes were called in the family. Now she laughed a low, pretty laugh at herself for thinking aloud, and said, reprovingly,

"And, after all, I never made any allowance for needlework. Perhaps *I* am intended to do that for them!"

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. BELVILLE UNDERSTANDS.

Sweet Hope! ethereal balm upon me shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

KEATS.

MRS. BELVILLE lived in a grand new London house, as fine as stucco could make it. You entered by a passage of double the usual width, and went up a very wide and gently-sloped staircase to an enormous mirror, which reflected the staircase, the smart servant, yourself, in the most ungraceful occupation of repeated mountings, and a row of hot-house plants.

Then, having turned your back on this enormous picture of real life, you got, by a second and similar process, to more mirrors,

and the double drawing-room. The room was distressingly lofty, with windows which only well-chosen giants could open and shut, with a carpet like feathers to walk on, and great chairs and small tables everywhere.

From somewhere, never exactly seen, but from behind a curtain trimmed with lace, emerged the stout and comfortable-looking young woman who called all the cold splendour of this green and gold abode her own.

She advanced with an honest smile on her face, so fat, fair, and broad, and she bade her father welcome.

"Listen, my dear," he said, after kissing her, "there is nobody, I suppose, in ambush behind that drapery? I never answer unpleasant letters."

"Papa, I really thought it my duty——"

"You have no duties towards me but those of a respectful, silent submission." Mr. Mawley spoke in the stiffest way, holding, however, both his daughter's hands in his,

and smiling very tenderly into her face. "I require no admonishing. You meant well, no doubt, but you did what you did very unadvisedly."

Mr. Mawley had a way of saying anything that he really intended to be kept in mind with singular force, but he never failed in kindness. Towards his daughters he had always been indulgent, but it was clear that he meant every word he had now uttered to be for ever borne in mind.

"Well, dear papa——"

"It is over now, and you can listen to me. It is my turn, you know. I held out against this marriage for some time. At last I thought it reasonable to yield. He is of a gentleman's family, and, as to himself, he is quite unexceptionable."

"Oh, you should see that dreadful home —lodgings—and such a set of people! One sister marries Naylor, the architect."

"Teresa must take her chance about that. There is another sister, and she may easily

marry worse. Mr. Naylor is a remarkable man. The allowance I have made you I shall make your sister, and she and Herbert declared themselves perfectly contented."

Mrs. Belville made a gesture of contempt.

"Money is not the *only* thing, neither is it the *best* thing in this world. There are unpurchasable things in life, and if Teresa is convinced that she secures such things by her marriage, I cannot contradict her. I have the highest possible opinion of Herbert. I hope he will get on, as a man in a profession has a just right to hope to do. And now I will say another thing; you advised me in your letter to let them live with me at the Grange, if the marriage were really to take place, and never to allow Teresa to know Herbert's family. But I am *not* going to have them to live with me, and I am going to-day to see his mother."

Mrs. Belville wiped the tears from her eyes, but she was courageous.

"I hope," she said, "you will, on your side, forgive me, but yet I can't repent."

"I am contented to forgive you, child," he said, with a softened manner. "But as to Herbert and Teresa, I am convinced that the world will like them. Wherever they appear, they will be followed and admired."

The scene was over. Mrs. Belville had said in her heart, "He *wishes* to marry again—I *know* he does;" and then she tried hard, but with indifferent success, to appear appeased and satisfied.

By the next morning she had become both steadied in mind and gracious in manner. She and her father were at breakfast together. She said that Teresa could come to her to buy her wedding clothes. Some interest would, of course, be set in motion immediately for the next good living in the gift of the Chancellor.

"Mr. Harcourt sings very well—that might help him."

"Nonsense!" interrupted her father. "He

took a good degree, has behaved splendidly to my brother, and Marmaduke loves him. He is of their politics, and a man of character, and, for his age, of remarkable erudition. I know no one more likely to be a bishop."

Mrs. Belville raised her eyes in silence.

"She can choose plenty of things for her fitting out. Before the Palace comes, she may want much. I shall give her what I paid for you. I don't suppose she will want as much lace and white satin—suggest sheets and table-cloths. As long as she spends the money wisely, I shall be pleased to pay."

"Oh! I can suggest what you like," said the obedient daughter, surveying her own magnificent morning toilette with a smile of satisfaction. "I think you very wise and very kind. Of course Teresa would do best to choose things more for the country than the town. And if she wears the same gown at the head of your table too often, you can always give her another."

"I am afraid I might not think of what she wore. And I don't think she will be often at her old post. In fact, my love, I have already proposed to Lady Florence Reinecourt, and been accepted."

For a moment there was a terrible silence. Mrs. Belville's spoon shook, and struck the egg-shell china dangerously.

"Am I worse than Teresa?" He spoke with a laugh in his voice.

"I have no right to speak," she said; "but—but they are, or have always appeared to me, to be an insolent set. She is a young widow, too."

"Why, Teresa and Herbert are quite charmed. Herbert was a great friend of Mr. Reinecourt's, and lamented him as an elder brother when he died. Teresa admires her greatly. And of course she is a young widow—why should I marry an old one? And there is this great advantage—she can take care of herself, and has a decent jointure, and can bring her own carriage

and servants; and she can pay for them and not bother me. She can keep her jointure-house in town—she is welcome if it suits me. I have grown ten years younger since I spoke to her. How grave you look, love!"

"I married when my two brothers were alive, and a good moneyed settlement was all that people thought of for me."

"Why, you are not discontented?" asked Mr. Mawley, with great pain.

"Oh! no, my husband is an excellent husband. But it is so odd. Teresa marries just as she pleases—you begin life over again—you may have sons."

"If I have, you will be no worse off than when you married. I told Teresa, and I told Harcourt. But perhaps it would only have ended in talk if they had not welcomed it as the happiest of events. I am very grateful to them, I assure you."

"Very well," she said, with a painful [illegible]tion at her heart that there was some-

thing more in the world than satin curtains and fine gowns. "Can I take you anywhere this morning, or will you have the carriage to yourself?"

"I will be independent—I shall go to see Mrs. Harcourt. Don't wait luncheon."

Then the father and daughter rose up, and met by the door, with lingering looks on both sides.

"I should like to see you take to these things kindly," he said.

"Give me time," she answered, with a smile which, if not genuine, was very well acted. "I am not *very* sentimental, you know. And I have seen his family,"—which was not quite true—"and I don't desire to be conmected with the family of Naylor; and also I have had it from Mr. Herbert's sister's own lips that they dislike his marrying Teresa, and consider him a ruined man from the moment he unites himself to a woman who can neither cook a dinner nor make a shirt. Besides, they think her poor."

"Why, so she is," said Mr. Mawley, innocently. "And she may never be much richer. He might have picked up as much money, and a more useful wife. I should not attempt to deny it. I am glad you have told me their opinions. It was very much on that ground that I forbade the thing at first. But they are reasonable people, and *this* has to be remembered, that, though it is right and wise very often for a girl to marry money,"—Mr. Mawley gave a glance round the painted cornice that vexed his daughter,—"she must do it without any preoccupation of mind. *Then* she can be happy and loving, satisfied and thankful. But if she does it after having once given her heart to poverty, beauty, talent, the charm of manner, the attraction of high character, and general fascination—*then* she can't be happy. The moneyed man is too good for her; for she can't give him what he is willing to buy. Such is Teresa's case. She had been gazing on an imaginary Paradise; she was at last

unfit to go forth as the wife of another man into the hard, stony world, though every stone might have been a nugget. I have pondered it all. And just as I have described it to you it appeared to me. There was nothing for it but to consent. She must go to her husband, and work in his world as well as she can. Now I have made a grand recital of this affair. Let us speak no more of it. Good morning."

CHAPTER XVI.

A MORNING CALL.

We are oft but stricken deer,
Expiring in the woods, that care for none
Of those delightsome flowers they die upon.
ELIZABETH B. BROWNING.

MR. MAWLEY determined on paying an early visit to Mrs. Harcourt. He had provided himself with a card, on which he had written—"If you are engaged now, appoint any hour, to-morrow or the next day, which may be agreeable to you." He thought that was the best thing to do, in order not to take them unawares. If there was a dingy side to the home-life, Mr. Mawley's desire was to remain in ignorance of it, which was both wise and gentlemanly.

He got out of his cab, and proceeded to 97, Trowberry Terrace, on foot. He read the numbers as he went down. Before the open door of Ninety-seven stood a lady. Her veil was raised, her hair, just powdered grey, was beautiful to look at, rolled back in thick folds by a practised hand, and her calm, fair face, rosy with the sweet air and her early walk, was a wonderful sight in a London street. Even at fifty-four her countenance had the smiling sweetness of her childhood, as she looked at the grand-mannered stranger, who bowed, smiled, lifted his hat, and rang the bell.

Blushing, the pleasant-looking lady said,

"Mrs. Grigshaw, sir, is from home."

"But I was going to ask for Mrs. Harcourt," with another bow.

"I am Mrs. Harcourt," was answered, very gently, and with a slight sudden remembrance of the course of nature having made her a widow.

"And I, madam, am Mr. Mawley. I

believe our children have introduced us to each other."

Mrs. Harcourt was equal to the occasion. She had been having an early and most satisfactory meeting with Mr. Naylor; she had on all her best clothes, and she had been to Mr. Rivers, the clergyman, on the subject of the approaching marriage, for which the very day had now been named.

Mr. Mawley followed Mrs. Harcourt upstairs. That morning, the absence of the elder ladies being secured, Marian and Lizzie, with Rachel, the accomplished maid-of-all-work, as aide-de-camp, had cleaned, tidied, dusted, and polished every article in both the sitting-rooms. The windows were as bright as crystal; the trees in the back garden, where now a great laburnum was dripping with gold, were quite beautiful; the looking-glasses were glittering; the china on many shelves was gleaming white, green, blue, and red. A magnificent old painted cabinet, full of odds and ends, which

had all been brushed and dusted, was the great fact in the room, and looked its consequence; clean white lace flounced the lamp which hung from the ceiling; certain pictured ancestors in the back-room smiled down on the flowers and tables, in white satin and wonderful wigs, with the most benign approval; and to this new world, just washed and dressed, Mr. Mawley was introduced, under Mrs. Harcourt's protection. She, from the pleasant things that had just been done with Mr. Naylor, and the pleasant arrangements which she knew had been going on at home, in all the satisfaction of good clothes, and blessing the luck that had brought her guest on that auspicious morn to her newly-whitened doorstep, and up her fragrant stairs—she, from all these things, drew such comfort as brightened her whole appearance into an exhibition of wisdom, contentment, and joy which was absolutely captivating; and Mr.

Mawley was, in consequence, completely enthralled.

The scent of sweet-brier grew stronger and stronger; it was really delicious. The fresh air poured through the open windows, and they stood in the picturesque room, where a chestnut coffer, carved and gilt, with the Harcourt arms above the curiously-metaled keyhole, held the soap and dusters, sponges and chamois leathers, which had just that very moment been there hidden by the surprised young ladies, who had, by an incredible amount of speed, succeeded in effecting an unseen escape.

Was there ever anything so unexpected, so surprising, or so uncommonly perfect? Mr. Mawley, overwhelmed and delighted, walked up to the cabinet, placed a chair for Mrs. Harcourt to rest in after her walk, and asked to be allowed to look at a china sugar-basin—it was old Bow. By its side was silver of such a pattern that he sketched it into his note-book; there was a book

with coats of arms on the clasps—might he also copy them? He was in his element, and disported himself with a reckless forgetfulness of everything and everybody, Lady Florence Reinecourt included.

But, after half an hour, other realities of life rushed to his memory, and he began to talk of Herbert and Teresa. He did it much, as to facts, as he had done it to Mrs. Belville; and Mrs. Harcourt was charmed with his good sense and excellent understanding. He paid her compliments which had no insincerity in them. He said he should express his pleasure at knowing her to her admirable son. He assured her, in his lofty way, that limited means were to be respected, and that seeing *her* had made him yet happier in the contemplation of his child's choice. It was all unvarnished truth. Only none of it would have been said if the two girls and that hard-working Rachel had not been scouring and scrubbing, beautifying, tidying, selecting, and arranging; if the

trees had not been in young green leaf, the laburnum in fullest flower, and Mr. Naylor's sweet-brier filling the air with fragrance.

"But you have daughters, madam," exclaimed Mr. Mawley, in one of the sudden bursts of returning memory.

"I think they must be gone out," said Mrs. Harcourt, innocently.

Then Mr. Mawley said "Good-bye;" and the lady conducted him to the little landing-place on the turn of the stairs, where there were more shelves full of china, and a table in the recess, with roses in full bloom.

Just at this moment, coming up the stairs, a girl stopped, and hesitated.

"My youngest daughter," said Mrs. Harcourt. "Lizzie, this is Mr. Mawley."

Lizzie was always lovely. The momentary confusion brightened even her brightness. Admiration was evident on Mr. Mawley's face—admiration even to astonishment. They shook hands—there was almost a merry greeting. And with the brilliant

vision of a beautiful girl, with violets round her hat, trembling with excitement under his gaze, Mr. Mawley got out into the world of London streets, and meditated in this manner: "It is as lovely as a dream! I had no idea of such a place. We must push Herbert on. What a girl! It is a pity such a creature should marry young Naylor. Handed over to Lady Mawley for a season, she would set the town on fire. She is the handsomest girl alive!—what a wonderful thing! But thrown away—sadly thrown away. Naylor the architect—sad pity! What a complexion!—and I never saw such eyes!"

In this state of wonder, hope, and regret, he reached the door of Lady Florence Reinecourt, and was forthwith admitted to her presence, his last thought being—*That girl mustn't marry Naylor.*

It was a meditation made in the utmost mercy and kindness. He wished no harm to anyone—with his whole mind full of that one idea, he called on Lady Florence.

Lady Florence Reinecourt was a fine woman, with regular features, and a wonderful quantity of pale red hair. It was pale enough for flatterers to call it golden, but it was red; the pale eyebrows and eyelashes; and the complexion—so fair in a peculiar way—all corresponded with the fact of the hair being red; and she would have scorned to pretend to anything else. She lived in Belgravia—the house-agents had called it a "bijou residence"—she and her mother, the Dowager Lady Branksome, lived there together.

Lady Florence had married wisely, and not too well, old Lord Reinecourt's brother. He had been a clergyman of the high and dry school, and she had been happy with her old man in a reasonable, feminine, and contented manner. He had been able to leave her a thousand a year; and she had just two hundred and thirty pounds a year of her own.

She had respected Mr. Reinecourt, and

he had admired her with a ceaseless admiration. They had been the greatest people in their neighbourhood; and they had deserved their greatness and adorned it

Young curates basked in the sunshine of Lady Florence's unaffected smiles. Everyone of them could have fallen at her feet and confided to her all those things which they called secrets. At all public places, she had always been waited on by a multitude of pleasant-faced, well-dressed, white-tied men and youths, who knew her gleaming hair, and the wave of her parasol, half a mile off. Her charming old husband delighted in this homage. She was his own property; his best friend, tenderest nurse, most brilliant companion, and in fifty senses the crown of his life.

Lady Florence visited the sick, riding a wonderful pony sometimes, but oftener, as she was the dispenser of bounties, in a carriage which she drove up and down the most impassable roads, over ploughed fields,

and pretty much wherever she chose to go. The poor praised her. Old men blessed their eyes out loud when she passed before them, making a fair sight for them to talk of and remember, in her beautiful clothes, for she always dressed well, and she had words of pleasantness for everybody.

She was a woman who liked universal admiration in an innocent way, as people like the scent of flowers, as she liked also to be the one delight and fascination of her old husband's life. She had never cared for a young lover in her lonely youth. She had never cared for the excitement of society. But she liked a good house, ample means, fine scenery, and the opportunity for making a great many people happy.

She liked *work*. She drew very correctly, knew a good deal about architecture, could design her own furniture, and paint glass windows exceedingly well. She knew what Beauty meant, whether in form or

colour, and artists thought very highly of her criticism.

When Mr. Reinecourt died she had left their exquisite parsonage, the spreading lawn-land of the sloping glebe, and the shadow of the great chestnut trees, with a pang of severe regret. She never talked of her suffering. It had to be done, and she did it. She took the bijou residence, and her mother, Lady Branksome, came to live with her.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CONSULTATION.

Thy voice is a complaint, O crownëd City,
The blue sky coming there like God's great pity.
ELIZABETH B. BROWNING.

THEY were talking together as Mr. Mawley reached the house, and talking of him.

"He admired you when you were a young girl," said Lady Branksome. "I am so glad you said *Yes*. Mr. Reinecourt has been dead nearly three years, and you are young still——"

"Thirty-eight," said Lady Florence, never looking up, and turning over some papers. "I have always been fond of him, after a fashion. And I may live a long time, I feel

so healthy. I like something to do. The Grange is just that sufficiently large world in which one can breathe, and turn about without interfering with one's neighbours. I believe I am going to be very happy. I used to think I had a talent for making others happy; and one does not like to have one's gifts lying by neglected and out of use."

"The Grange is a lovely place, and a world large enough for any woman."

"It reminds me of the old life. The Rectory was so beautiful, and on the edge of his brother's Park. The Grange reminds me of all that, and the ecclesiastical element will be supplied by Teresa and Mr. Harcourt. I don't think I should have liked a daughter in my house. It is a love-match, I suppose. He is a charming man. Dear Mr. Reinecourt liked him extremely."

"Oh! yes; a silly love-match, in spite of beauty and accomplishments."

Lady Florence began to sing in a very

soft under-tone, as she went on working with Indian ink on some plans before her—

"'Will the love you are so rich in
Light a fire in the kitchen?
Or the little God of Love turn the spit-spit-spit?'

Mr. Mawley must give them more if they have not got enough."

"He can't, except out of savings—if—if——"

"I understand. But they must be made comfortable. What a woman wants is *a home.* I always held that, you remember. Not so much a husband as a home. A home is a sweet, lovely thing."

"That's *your* theory. But people would give up a home for a husband in more primitive days."

"Ah! but that was quite a mistake," said Lady Florence, gently.

Then Mr. Mawley was announced, and she rose and met him in her elegant feminine way, with the pretty, soft smile that

had helped to make her powerful among men.

After a few pleasant words, they began to talk of the world outside. Mr. Mawley said he had seen Mrs. Harcourt, and he spoke in a tone of delighted surprise.

"I have seen a daughter," he said; "she is the most magnificent beauty I ever beheld. Not a pretty girl at all, but a splendid, perfect beauty, and scarcely out of her teens. Of the pleasantest manners, too, and as graceful as a fawn!"

"How nice!" said Lady Florence, washing in her shades very neatly. "What are you going to do with her?"

"I am sorry to say," began Mr. Mawley, gravely, "that she is engaged to be married to Mr. Naylor, the architect."

"Indeed!" There was lively surprise in Lady Florence's voice and manner. She put down her paint-brush, and looked at Mr. Mawley with a face full of thought. "I know all about them. Mr. Naylor was here

yesterday. I wanted him to look over these plans of mine—they are for cottages and a school. He has been employed a great deal by Lord Reinecourt. Down there there was an odd, picturesque, dilapidated, black-and-white old house—I have got a sketch of it somewhere. That house once belonged to the Harcourts. A short time, perhaps six years ago, Lord Reinecourt bought it; and I saw the title-deeds, and found that out. I never stopped then to think if Herbert was of the same family; but Mr. Naylor reminded me of the house, and of my sketching it, and he said he was going to marry one of the descendants of that Harcourt family. And I congratulated him. What a pity!"

"And why do *you* think it a pity?" asked Mr. Mawley, a little uncomfortably.

"Oh! because she won't be happy!"

"You know him?"

"There is nothing the matter with the man. Everybody likes Mr. Naylor. But

his place is not her place, if her brother marries Teresa, and if she is really handsome."

"There is no doubt about the beauty."

"Then don't you see," said Lady Florence, beginning to use her painting-brush, "she will be with Herbert, and with you, and Lady Mawley, and he will be in an office, or at a meeting, or on a board; and we shall admire her, and show her off, and all our men will be civil to her, and our guests will be her admirers, and they will have two lives—which means that there will be *no home!* And a home is all a woman wants."

"Thank you," said Mr. Mawley, drily.

"You know what I mean, sir—I have said it before. Some time or other I'll make you understand it; in the meantime, I think Mr. Naylor has chosen unfortunately. I should test her."

"How?"

"Show her what she loses or leaves—

or, rather, what she turns her back upon. Things have happened badly for Mr. Naylor's happiness. I really know Mr. Naylor very well, and I wish him to be happy. There is no happiness where there is regret on either side, especially if the regret be on the wife's side. It will be natural for her to see our lives by-and-by. I should show it to her now. If, after that, she chooses Mr. Naylor, she will be happy."

"But if she regrets having chosen him?"

"She can marry some one else."

"But somebody who was anybody could neither win nor woo her at Trowberry Terrace."

"Perhaps not. She could pay a long visit to my mother."

"Lady Branksome, will you introduce and do your best for a charming creature, the handsomest girl in the world?"

"I should enjoy it of all things," said the elder lady; and then they laughed.

But there was no malice in their amuse-

ment. It was chiefly at the idea that had so quickly grown into life, of old Lady Branksome beginning life again with a beautiful young girl by her side.

"I should be the fashion once more," she said, enjoying the joke. "I should be so welcome, with such a girl at my elbow! Really, if you leave me again, Florence, you should in common justice do something of this sort for me. Let us see the lovely Lizzie. We'll find out where Trowberry Terrace is, and go there."

"Bravo!" cried Mr. Mawley.

"We'll do better," said Lady Florence. "We'll take Lizzie to the Bridgeworths' flower-show. It is going to be a beautiful thing, and everybody is going. I am going. Mr. Mawley, write and ask to take Lizzie, and say how pleased I shall be to have her under my care. If you manage it well, all will go quite smoothly. I mean nothing but good. Mr. Naylor will have to be chosen over again with her eyes open. It

is impossible to keep those eyes shut; however angelic they may be, they will look and long. Let it all be done before they marry. He told me they were to be married in a month. If it is done after marriage, all hope of a happy home is gone from them; and I am sure I am right."

Right or wrong, she had her own way. In some manner, which did justice to Lady Florence's instructions, Lizzie was to go with Lady Branksome, herself, and Mr. Mawley to the flower-show. The loveliest and most simple of bonnets, the most suitable costume altogether, was provided, and Lizzie astonished even Lady Branksome's critical and experienced eye. As to herself, she suddenly awoke to an estimation of her value—of the worth of youth, freshness, and untired nature, a superior loveliness. She was the admired of all admirers. Who was she? Lady Florence laughed with her few most intimate friends. "My future daughter-in-law is to marry Miss Harcourt's

brother." The news spread, and even in the great crowd of London life, "Have you seen Miss Harcourt?" was on all lips.

Then the ladies brought her home, thanked her, smiled on her, told her to come again, and Mr. Mawley himself took her back to Trowberry Terrace. She entered the house, found Mrs. Grigshaw in the passage, who began looking her over with tearful satisfaction, and blessing her with a solemnity that made Lizzie cry too. She ran upstairs, where Marian was working by the light of a single candle. Marian made a sign to her to step softly, as her mother was asleep, with her mouth distressingly wide open, in the black leather chair, and said, "My darling, how pretty you look!"—speaking in a whisper. "Don't be vexed, dearest, but Frederick has been here—he did not go away this morning as we expected yesterday—and he did not like your going to this smart place, and he said so. In fact, he said, and I suppose he was right,

that his leave should have been asked. I said that it had all happened so quickly, that we thought he had been on his professional affairs, two hundred miles away; and he said, with great spirit—I am sure you would have liked him for it, darling—'Then she could have stayed at home.' He is *so* in love with you, Lizzie. It is a good thing to get the whole heart of so good a man. Say something nice to him when he comes to-morrow. Dear mother has been puzzling herself over her right or wrong doings in this case; and as no profit could come of her being self-accusing, I read her off to sleep."

"I am sorry," began Lizzie, "but the people I have been with are almost our relations now. I am asked to be Teresa's bridesmaid, but I refused, as I could not put off my own marriage. He is right in thinking I have seen a new world. If he thinks *that*, he is right. But why should he be jealous of it? He has the nobility of genius,

and the power to work—is he to be afraid of the influence of those whose nobility is only that which has come to them by chance and inheritance? I hope he won't say anything to me."

"Well, let us sleep on it. We shall all be wiser to-morrow. Mother, we must go to bed. Isn't Lizzie pretty?"

There was a sudden sounding of the knocker. A door was opened. There was a running upstairs. Frederick Naylor stood among them. Even he started when he saw Lizzie.

"Whose taste is all that?" he asked, after a first tender greeting.

"Lady Florence's, of course. She has the most perfect ideas."

"But, Lizzie, I did not wish you to find your best friends among those of so much higher rank—they employ and pay me."

"Higher rank," repeated Lizzie—"I can't help the truth. In a few weeks they will be among *my* nearest connexions.'

There was a distinct emphasis on the *my*; and she looked at Frederick steadily for a reply.

"I suppose your head can stand it," he said; "but you look vexed, and I have vexed you. Give me your dear hand, darling."

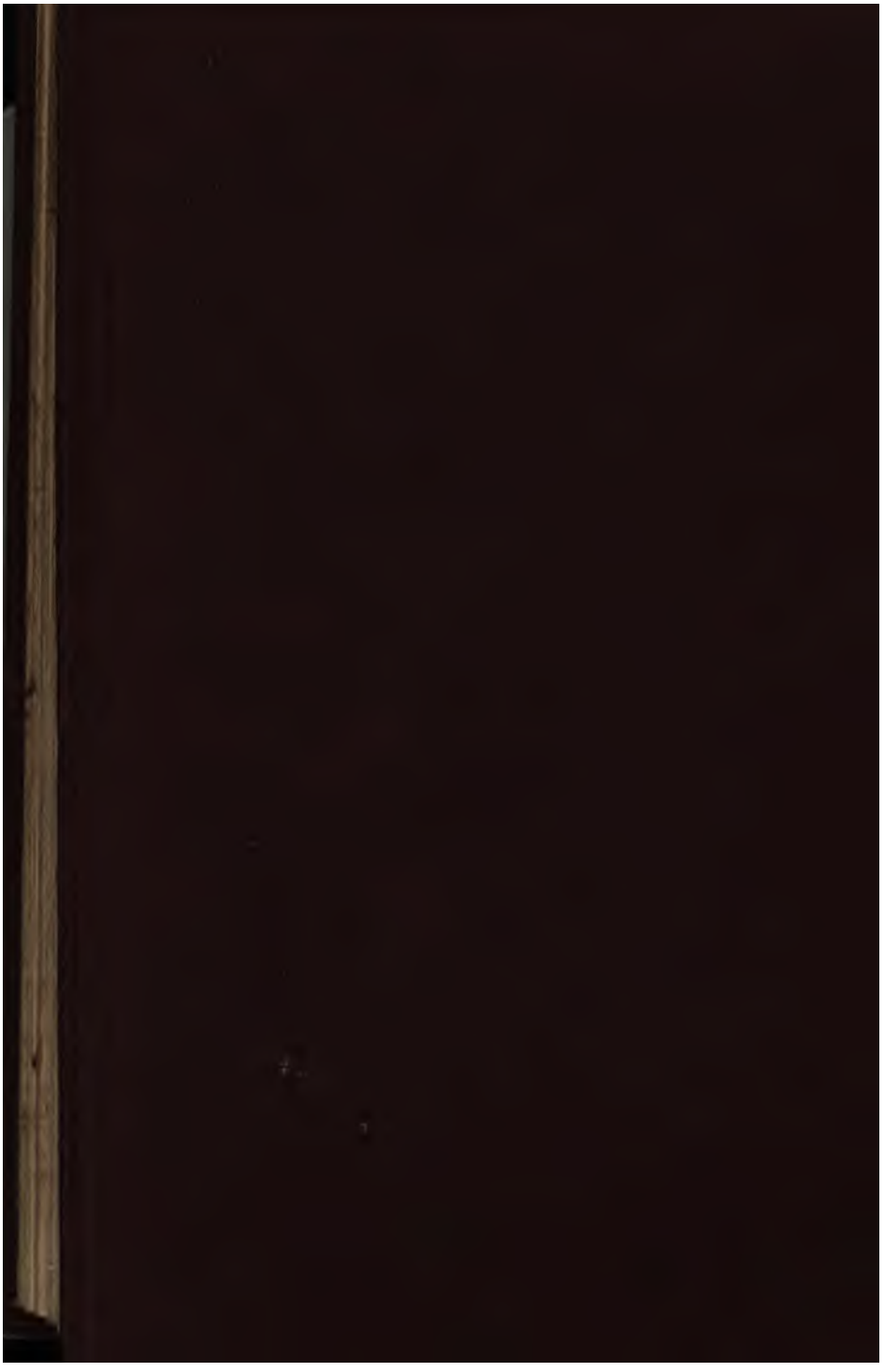
"I think I am frightened more than vexed. What has happened will happen again. You won't be able always to go everywhere with me. You will be from home—at work. How is it all to be?"

"As I never tried, I don't know," said Frederick, laughing. "Please to forgive me."

So he was forgiven; and he went away. That night Lizzie cried herself to sleep. But before Frederick Naylor had gone away, Marian had taken him aside, and spoken, with her sweet, steady gaze holding him in listening subjection.

"Lizzie's life has been her nursery—her school at Amiens, her life *here*. But there

was a life before that. Have you never thought of that? Shrink from nothing. Fear nothing. Why should she lose anything, when her husband is a man who can gain all?"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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